



COUNCIL SUMMONS

To Members of the Metropolitan Borough Council

Dear Councillor

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

be held on **Thursday 23rd January, 2020 at 6.30 pm at the Town Hall, Bootle** to

transact the business set out on the agenda overleaf.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dwayne D.", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Chief Executive

Town Hall,
Southport

Wednesday 15 January 2020

Please contact Ruth Harrison, Democratic Services Manager
on 0151 934 2046 or e-mail ruth.harrison@sefton.gov.uk

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

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A G E N D A

- 1. Apologies for Absence**
- 2. Declarations of Interest** (Pages 5 - 6)

Members are requested to give notice of any disclosable pecuniary or personal interest.

An advice note on declarations of interests is attached.

- 3. Minutes of Previous Meeting** (Pages 7 - 14)
Minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2019.

4. Mayor's Communications

Public Session

5. Matters Raised by the Public

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

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

Council Business Session

6. Questions Raised by Members of the Council

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

- 7. The Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020-2025** (Pages 15 - 36)
Report of the Director of Public Health

- 8. Programme of Meetings – 2020/21 Municipal Year** (Pages 37 - 60)
Report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer

- | | | |
|------------|---|-------------------|
| 9. | Submission of Overview and Scrutiny Working Group Final Reports to Council
Report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer | (Pages 61 - 64) |
| 10. | Senior Management Arrangements
Joint Report of the Chief Executive and the Chief Personnel Officer | (Pages 65 - 104) |
| 11. | Pay Policy
Report of Head of Corporate Resources | (Pages 105 - 124) |
| 12. | Council Tax Reduction (CTR) Scheme 2020/21, Council Tax Base 2020/21 and Changes to Council Tax Discounts for Empty Homes
Report of the Head of Corporate Resources | (Pages 125 - 204) |
| 13. | Revenue and Capital Budget Update - Treasury Management Position to October 2019
Report of the Head of Corporate Resources | (Pages 205 - 214) |
| 14. | Revenue and Capital Budget Update - Additional Capital Estimates
Joint Report of the Executive Director and Head of Corporate Resources. | (Pages 215 - 226) |
| 15. | Membership of Committees 2019/20
To consider any changes to the Membership of any committees etc. | |
| 16. | Motion submitted by Councillor Brennan - Closure of Byng House, Southport | (Pages 227 - 228) |
| 17. | Motion submitted by Councillor Sir Ron Watson - Adult Social Care | (Pages 229 - 230) |
| 18. | Motion submitted by Councillor Pugh - Burscough Curves | (Pages 231 - 232) |

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

COUNCIL

MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, SOUTHPORT ON THURSDAY 21ST NOVEMBER, 2019

PRESENT: The Mayor (Councillor Burns) in the Chair
The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Robinson) Vice Chair

Councillors Atkinson, Bennett, Blackburne, Bradshaw, Brodie - Browne, Brough, Byrom, Carragher, Cluskey, Dawson, Dodd, Dowd, Doyle, Dutton, Evans, Fairclough, Friel, Gannon, Grace, Halsall, Hardy, Howard, Irving, Jones, Keith, John Kelly, John Joseph Kelly, Killen, Lappin, Lewis, Maher, Marshall, McCann, McGinnity, McKinley, Morris, Murphy, Myers, Brenda O'Brien, Michael O'Brien, O'Hanlon, Pitt, Pugh, Pullin, Roche, Roscoe, Sathiy, John Sayers, Yvonne Sayers, Shaw, Thomas, Lynne Thompson, Veidman, Waterfield and Sir Ron Watson

56. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brennan, Carr, Cummins, Hands, Moncur, Spencer, Anne Thompson, Tweed and Webster.

57. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Pugh declared a personal interest in relation to Agenda Item 6, Questions raised by Members of the Council, Question 5 in relation to Applications to St. Teresa's Primary School, family members attend the School. Councillor Pugh remained in the meeting and took part in the debate.

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

58. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 19 September 2019 be approved as a correct record.

59. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

Remembrance Sunday

Agenda Item 3

COUNCIL- THURSDAY 21ST NOVEMBER, 2019

The Mayor reflected on the recent Remembrance Sunday events that took place, she extended her appreciation to all of the Members of the Council, Officers, Royal British Legion, Ex Service Organisations and members of the public who attended the various Remembrance Sunday events held throughout the Borough, which were all extremely well attended.

Mayors Charity Night

The Mayor reported on the Motown Charity Night that she had hosted on 15 November 2019 and reported that £813.00 was raised for the Mayors Charity, she thanked everybody who attended.

The Mayor reminded the Council that she would be hosting a Burns Themed Night in Bootle Town Hall on Saturday 25 January 2020. Tickets are £20.00 which includes a buffet and live entertainment. The Mayor reported that any Member wishing to purchase a ticket should contact Shaun Pimblett the Civic and Mayoral Officer.

60. MATTERS RAISED BY THE PUBLIC

The Mayor reported that no matters had been raised by members of the public.

61. QUESTIONS RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

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

1. Question submitted by Councillor Watson to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Maher)
2. Question submitted by Councillor Watson to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Maher)
3. Question submitted by Councillor Irving to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Maher)
4. Question submitted by Councillor Watson to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Maher)
5. Question submitted by Councillor Pugh to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Safeguarding (Councillor John Joseph Kelly)
6. Question submitted by Councillor Pugh to the Cabinet Member for Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services (Councillor Lappin)
7. Question submitted by Councillor Pugh to the Cabinet Member for Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services (Councillor Lappin)

COUNCIL- THURSDAY 21ST NOVEMBER, 2019

8. Question submitted by Councillor Dawson to the Cabinet Member for Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services (Councillor Lappin)
9. Question submitted by Councillor Dawson to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Maher)
10. Question submitted by Councillor Dawson to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Skills (Councillor Atkinson)
11. Question submitted by Councillor Dawson to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Maher)
12. Question submitted by Councillor Dawson to the Cabinet Member for Locality Services (Councillor Fairclough)
23. Question submitted by Councillor Dawson to the Cabinet Member for Locality Services (Councillor Fairclough)
14. Question submitted by Councillor Brough to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Skills (Councillor Atkinson)
15. Question submitted by Councillor Bennett to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Maher)

together with the responses given. Supplementary questions to questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 14 were responded to by the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Members for Children's, Schools and Safeguarding, Locality Services, Regeneration and Skills and Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services.

62. MAKING THE FORMBY AND LITTLE ALT CAR NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Council considered the report of the Chief Planning Officer in relation to the making of the Formby and Little Altcar Neighbourhood Plan.

The report set out the procedures followed in relation to the making of a neighbourhood plan and the outcome of the referendum that took place on 10 October 2019.

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

RESOLVED:

That the Council approved the "making" of the Formby and Little Altcar Neighbourhood Plan in order that it becomes a part of the Development Plan for Sefton.

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COUNCIL- THURSDAY 21ST NOVEMBER, 2019

63. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 – SECTION 85 - ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS – COUNCILLOR RICHARD HANDS

Further to Minute No. 97 of the meeting held on 25 April 2019, the Council considered the report of the Head of Corporate Resources which requested the Council to approve and authorise the absence of Councillor Richard Hands from attendance at Council and Committee Meetings pursuant to Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972.

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

RESOLVED: That:

- (1) the current absence from all Council and Committee Meetings of Councillor Richard Hands due to ill-health be authorised and approved for the period until the 8 May 2020, pursuant to Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972: and
- (2) the Council sends its best wishes to Councillor Hands.

64. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES 2019/20

The Mayor reported the following changes to memberships of Committees, representation on Joint Authorities and Outside Bodies:

Councillor Dowd to replace Councillor Murphy as the Scrutiny Link on the Liverpool City Region Scrutiny Committee;

Councillor Brough to replace Councillor Morris on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulation, Compliance and Corporate Services);
and

Councillor Morris to replace Councillor Brough as the Council representative for the Mersey Port Health Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the changes to the various Committees, representation on Joint Authorities and Outside Bodies as set out above be approved.

65. MATTERS DEALT WITH IN ACCORDANCE WITH RULE 46 OF THE SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULES (CALL-IN AND URGENCY) OF THE CONSTITUTION

The Council considered the report of the Leader of the Council in relation to a matter that was dealt with in accordance with Rule 46 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules of the Council Constitution, whereby “call in” was waived.

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

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

66. MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR PUGH - VIDEO STREAMING AT MEETINGS

It was moved by Councillor Pugh, seconded by Councillor Evans:

Video-Streaming Council Meetings

The council agrees in principle to the video-streaming of Full Council, Cabinet and Planning meetings in accordance with the drive towards more open and transparent government with recordings to be archived and made available on the Council's website.

An **amendment** was moved by Councillor Halsall, seconded by Councillor J. J. Kelly that the Motion be amended as follows:

After the words "in principle" add the words "subject to cost and having regard to current budget restraints".

Replace the words "Full Council, Cabinet and Planning meetings" with "Council meetings".

After the words "towards more open" add the word "inclusive".

An additional last paragraph be added "Furthermore we should explore the possibility of making available sign language and subtitles so we can be as accessible to as wide a range of our residents with their additional needs as possible".

On the show of hands, the Mayor declared the amendment was carried unanimously and due to the financial implications would be referred to the Cabinet for consideration, it was:

RESOLVED:

Video-Streaming Council Meetings

The council agrees, in principle, subject to cost and having regard to current budget restraints, to the video-streaming of council meetings in accordance with the drive towards more open *inclusive* and transparent government with recordings to be archived and made available on the Council's website

Furthermore we should explore the possibility of making available sign language and subtitles so we can be as accessible to as wide a range of our residents with their additional needs as possible.

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67. MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR PUGH - FLOODING

It was moved by Councillor Pugh, seconded by Councillor Dodd:

Flooding In Sefton

This council:

- (1) recognises the serious problems of flooding across Sefton exacerbated by the effects of climate change.
- (2) notes that there is a significant problem in some areas with surface water severely overwhelming old and inadequate drainage systems.
- (3) notes to the reluctance of the Water Utility companies and suppliers to prioritise perennial trouble spots despite residents paying for surface drainage.
- (4) agrees to support and promote residents' applications for significant water rates reductions where there is clear evidence of persistent failure in the surface drainage system and to inform the utility companies accordingly.

An **amendment** was moved by Councillor McKinley, seconded by Councillor John Sayers that the Motion be amended as follows:

That paragraph (4) be deleted.

That the following paragraphs be added:

“The Environment Agency have identified surface water flooding as an issue that will worsen with the impact of climate change, however, their ability to influence investment decisions to deal with surface water and fluvial flooding and the updating of ageing infrastructure is hampered by insufficient government funding and the business model of privatised water companies who prioritise shareholder profit at the expense of investment to protect households and businesses”.

“We commend the proactive measures taken by Sefton Council and the Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership who are at the forefront of initiatives in the North West in raising issues and proposing solutions to address the risks associated with surface water and fluvial flooding, who are also constrained by insufficient funding from central government and the impact of draconian cuts as a result of austerity”.

“This Council calls on the next government to adopt measures to end the scandal of pillaging our national strategic assets through prioritising shareholder profits instead of investing any surplus funds in measures to address the risks associated with climate change, including flooding”.

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Following debate, on a show of hands, the Mayor declared that the amendment was carried by 34 votes to 21 votes with 1 Abstention.

Thereafter, on a show of hands, the Mayor declared that the Substantive Motion was carried by 34 votes to 21 votes with 1 Abstention.

FLOODING IN SEFTON

This council:

- (1) recognises the serious problems of flooding across Sefton exacerbated by the effects of climate change.
- (2) notes that there is a significant problem in some areas with surface water severely overwhelming old and inadequate drainage systems.
- (3) notes to the reluctance of the Water Utility companies and suppliers to prioritise perennial trouble spots despite residents paying for surface drainage.

The Environment Agency have identified surface water flooding as an issue that will worsen with the impact of climate change, however, their ability to influence investment decisions to deal with surface water and fluvial flooding and the updating of ageing infrastructure is hampered by insufficient government funding and the business model of privatised water companies who prioritise shareholder profit at the expense of investment to protect households and businesses.

We commend the proactive measures taken by Sefton Council and the Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership who are at the forefront of initiatives in the North West in raising issues and proposing solutions to address the risks associated with surface water and fluvial flooding, who are also constrained by insufficient funding from central government and the impact of draconian cuts as a result of austerity.

This Council calls on the next government to adopt measures to end the scandal of pillaging our national strategic assets through prioritising shareholder profits instead of investing any surplus funds in measures to address the risks associated with climate change, including flooding.

68. MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR DAWSON - NHS SERVICES IN THE NORTH WEST

The Mayor indicated that Councillor Dawson had expanded his Motion by including a paragraph 3 and an addendum was circulated in that respect.

It was moved by Councillor Dawson, seconded by Councillor Pugh and following debate, it was unanimously:

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RESOLVED:

NHS Services in the North-West

This Council:

- 1) Notes that plans to restructure the provision of NHS services, particularly the siting of acute services throughout the North West Region, has been continuing for some time, with the process largely proceeding in secret and not involving either patients or the wider communities involved.
- 2) Commits itself to working with local communities to ensure that profound changes which significantly affect the manner in which the NHS is delivered and received in this area are not introduced into hospitals and clinics serving local communities, without the fullest genuine involvement of local residents and their elected representatives in any such decisions.
- 3) Following the Clinical Senate Review of the Transformation of Acute Services in Southport & Ormskirk NHS Trust (2019), this Council wishes to make clear, in the context of that report, that the Council faced with the alternative of consolidated hot site in Southport or Ormskirk, has a clear preference for Southport.

69. MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR DAWSON - SUPPORTING THE RETAIL ENVIRONMENT IN SEFTON

It was moved by Councillor Dawson, seconded by Councillor Pugh and

RESOLVED:

That the Motion in relation to “Supporting the Retail Environment in Sefton” be withdrawn from the Agenda.

Agenda Item 7

Report to:	Council	Date of Meeting:	23 January 2020
Subject:	The Sefton Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020-2025		
Report of:	Director of Public Health	Wards Affected:	(All Wards);
Portfolio:	Cabinet Member - Health and Wellbeing		
Is this a Key Decision:	Yes	Included in Forward Plan:	Yes
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

The paper seeks to present to Council the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020 – 2025 for Sefton, entitled; Living Well in Sefton 2020-2025. It will set out how it has been developed, the governance steps prior to council and how we will measure its impact throughout the life of the Strategy.

Recommendation(s):

That the Council approve the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020-2025

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

- The Strategy and the ambition for the wider system have been developed through a full consultation process and with oversight of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy Steering Group. The Strategy uses the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and both local and national evidence to identify key ambition for the system that will improve the health and wellbeing of people in Sefton, and will help to reduce health inequalities.
- It is a statutory obligation for the Health and Wellbeing Board to produce a Health Well Being Strategy based on the most recent Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

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

Not applicable.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

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All implications for the council and partners will be contained within existing resources

(B) Capital Costs

None identified at this time.

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):
Legal Implications: To fulfil the requirements of the Health and Social Care Act 2012.
Equality Implications: There are no equality implications.

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: The Strategy will seek to focus improvement on outcomes for the most vulnerable residents.
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: The Strategy will seek to improve the Health and Wellbeing of all our communities.
Commission, broker and provide core services: The Strategy will set strategic direction and vision for how we commission, broker and provide core services.
Place – leadership and influencer: The Strategy will set strategic direction and vision to improve Health and Wellbeing.
Drivers of change and reform: The Strategy will set strategic direction and vision to improve Health and Wellbeing.
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: The Strategy will set strategic direction and vision to improve Health and Wellbeing.
Greater income for social investment: Not applicable.
Cleaner Greener: The Strategy will set strategic direction and vision to improve Health and Wellbeing

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Head of Corporate Resources (FD5881/19) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD4065/19.) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

The development of the strategy has been subject to a public consultation which ran from August to September 2019 as an online consultation, with additional confirmatory focus groups held in November 2019

Implementation Date for the Decision

Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Minutes of the Council Meeting

Contact Officer:	Matthew Ashton, Director of Public Health.
Telephone Number:	0151 934 3373
Email Address:	Matthew.Ashton@sefton.gov.uk

Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

Living Well in Sefton 2020-2025

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1. Introduction/Background

The previous Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Sefton ran from 2014 – 2020. A new Sefton Health and Wellbeing Strategy for 2020-2025 has been developed; Living Well in Sefton 2020 – 2025.

- 1.2 Development of a Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy is a legal duty under the Health and Social Care Act (2012), which is shared by the Local Authority and Clinical Commissioning groups and is overseen by the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- 1.3 The Health and Wellbeing Strategy is the overarching plan which identifies the key ambition which the wider system should focus on in order to improve the health and wellbeing and to reduce health inequalities in Sefton. It is based on needs and assets identified in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and through public and stakeholder engagement, taking account of the latest policy, guidance and evidence.

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1.4 The high-level aims of the Strategy are to:

- To set out a framework of needs and ambition in which all local health, social care and related services are commissioned
- To provide the strategic vehicle to address local needs and inequalities in health and wellbeing
- To improve outcomes for local communities, especially for the most vulnerable and excluded citizens

The aims must then seek to;

- Align commissioning intentions for health, care and wellbeing services,
- Promote more collaborative, person and place-centred ways of working,
- Connect and strengthen activity taking place elsewhere in the Community, Voluntary and Faith sector, within health and care providers, and in organisations and partners whose work focuses on the wider determinants of health.

2. Process of development

2.1 The Health and Wellbeing Strategy Group was established in early 2019 to lead on the development of the new strategy. The group was made up of key stakeholders from across the organisation, Clinical Commissioning Groups and the Voluntary Sector.

2.2 The ambition within the strategy are based on current and future needs as outlined in the Sefton 2018 Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, and shaped by our consultation and engagement events, and focuses on issues that affect large numbers of people, not just the health problems that people die from

2.3 The Strategy development and papers detailing emerging key themes have been reviewed and overseen by the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Adults Social Care and Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

2.3 A key part of the development has been the public consultation and engagement.

This was conducted in two phases;

- Phase one engagement ran from July through to August and focused on testing out the relevance of Joint Strategic Needs Assessment identified needs through an online questionnaire which was designed to be accessible, and available in an easy read format
- In September, the Health and Wellbeing Board received initial consultation findings and an outline of the draft strategy.
- Following this Phase two of the engagement process commenced, which involved a further short period of public engagement on the outlined draft strategy itself. This took place through focus groups across the borough with members of the public and key stakeholders. This has helped shape

the ambition. A full consultation report will be received by the Public Engagement and Consultation Panel in March 2020.

- 2.4 This report seeks to present to Council a final version of Living Well Sefton 2020 – 2025, for its approval, with a view to adoption from the 1st April 2020.
- 2.5 To support the delivery of the strategy regular performance reports will be presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board. The strategy proposes as a minimum 12 month reviews; on impact over the last period and ambition to be set for the next 12 months.
- 2.6 The delivery of the strategy will be made real through key plans including the NHS 5 year plan, 'Sefton2gether', The Children and Young Peoples Plan and the work of the Integrated Commissioning Group. The Strategy is a review and refresh of the current Health and Wellbeing Strategy, which reflects the needs of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. The progress and impact of the strategy will be driven through the Health and Wellbeing Board holding the system to account. There will be a performance monitoring framework which will allow the Health and Wellbeing Board to be assured of impact and progress. The activity of the Health and Wellbeing Board will be reviewed regularly, ambition reviewed, and progress will be shared with key stakeholders and residents of Sefton

3. Conclusion

The Strategy is presented to Council for approval, with adoption from 1st April 2020.

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Sefton

Health and Wellbeing
Strategy
2020-2025

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Foreword

“How are you? Are you well? Are you doing OK?”

We all talk about our health and how life is treating us. When our physical or mental health takes a turn for the worse it can make it harder to do the things that we care about.

‘Living Well in Sefton 2020-2025’ is our new Health and Wellbeing Strategy, and the vision we are working towards is that Sefton will be:

‘A confident and connected borough that offers the things we all need to start, live and age well, where everyone has a fair chance of a positive and healthier future’

‘Living Well in Sefton 2020-2025’ is more than words on a page. The messages in this new strategy are directed towards large scale, meaningful changes on the big issues which matter to people who live and work here. Our ambitions for better and more equal health and wellbeing span all the way from pregnancy and the start of life, to the close of our lives, and speak to everyone; not just health and care services. This is because we know that the most powerful changes come from creating more of the right conditions and opportunities for people’s health to thrive.

Sefton has a very active voluntary, community and faith sector, fantastic natural assets, and committed health and care services. Our challenge is to nurture each of these and to look for connections between them, so opportunities for better health and wellbeing are more than the sum of their parts, and accessible to everyone.

We will not be able to remove Sefton’s health and social inequalities altogether, however by signing up to ‘Living Well in Sefton 2020-25’ and its ambitions for health and wellbeing, we can create better opportunities for health. If we work together to deliver this strategy, we will see improved health and wellbeing for people Sefton in both the short and longer term.

Having the right strategy is only the first step. The important next step is how we deliver it and how we embed our commitment to eliminating health inequalities in everything we do. If we want to improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities, every single sector, organisation and community has a role to play. Together we can really make a difference to health and wellbeing in Sefton.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Ian Moncur'.

Cllr Ian Moncur,
Chair of Sefton Health and Wellbeing Board



One Vision

A confident and connected borough that offers the things we all need to start, live and age well, where everyone has a fair chance of a positive and healthier future.

Seven Principles and ways of working

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1 Ambitions are based on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, and shaped by our consultation and engagement activity

2 Recognition that health and life chances are significantly shaped by a wide range of factors

3 Public, private, and voluntary, community, and faith sectors will all work together to address these ambitions

4 Ambitions are high level, and informed by evidence and guidance wherever possible

5 Ambitions will improve health and wellbeing for everybody, but will focus on narrowing inequalities for those with greatest need

6 Prevention will be embedded in everything we do

7 Partners will work together to keep the most vulnerable members of our community safe

Ten Ambitions

Start well

- 1 Every child will achieve the best start in their first 1001 days
- 2 Education and training will enable every young person to unlock the door to more choices and opportunities
- 3 Every child and young person will have a successful transition to adulthood

Live well

- 4 Health, care and wellbeing services across Sefton will work together
- 5 Everyone will have a fulfilling role which can support their needs
- 6 The wider system will have a strong role in prevention and early intervention

Age well

- 7 Older people will stay active, connected and involved
- 8 As people grow older they will be provided with support tailored to their needs
- 9 Our communities and the built environment will meet the needs of people as they get older

All age

- 10 The places where we live will make it easy to be healthy and happy, with opportunities for better health and wellbeing on our doorstep

Making it happen

- The Health and Wellbeing Board will hold the health and social care system and wider partners to account
- A performance monitoring framework will provide assurance of impact and progress to the Health and Wellbeing Board
- The activity of the Health and Wellbeing Board will be reviewed regularly, ambitions updated, and progress will be shared with key stakeholders and Sefton residents

Introduction

What is the Health and Wellbeing Strategy?

The Health and Wellbeing Strategy (HWBS) is the overarching plan to improve the health and wellbeing of people in Sefton and to reduce health inequalities (differences in health between different communities or groups of people). We know that in Sefton, good health and wellbeing is not experienced equally across the borough, and too many people experience poor health.

The strategy is based on Sefton’s needs and assets identified in the Sefton Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)¹ and through public and stakeholder engagement. It takes account of the latest policy, guidance and evidence. The Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) holds the Sefton health and care system, including wider partners, to account, by enabling collaboration and challenging progress on the key ambitions.

It is increasingly important that our Sefton health and care system, including wider partners, work together to meet the needs of our entire population. This means focusing on the areas of greatest need and ensuring we are doing the best we can with the resources available. We also need to increase our efforts on prevention, prioritise both physical and mental health, and create connections across the public, private and voluntary, community and faith (VCF) sectors to make lives better for people in Sefton.

How has the Health and Wellbeing Strategy been developed?

In 2019 we spoke to members of our local communities and other key stakeholders and asked what they thought the JSNA told us². From this we identified a number of key themes, aims and ambitions. We then carried out a series of focus groups to ensure we correctly captured everyone’s views. Existing evidence, guidance and best practice from elsewhere, was merged with our local findings to inform the final structure and content of the strategy.

Key principles and ways of working

Our key principles and ways of working are outlined below: -

- Our ambitions are based on current and future needs as outlined in the Sefton Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and shaped by our consultation and engagement events. They focus on issues that affect large numbers of people, not just the health problems that people die from.
- We recognise that health and life chances are significantly shaped by a wide range of factors known as the determinants of health. These include where we live, how we socialise, what opportunities we have, and what services are in place to support us.³
- To achieve our ambitions, the public, private, and voluntary community and faith sectors will all work together, with the interests of our communities at the heart of what they do.
- The ambitions we outline in the strategy are high level, informed by evidence and guidance wherever possible. They use real-world experiences, and lessons from landmark reports such as Due North⁴ and Fair Society Healthy Lives⁵.
- Ambitions will improve health and wellbeing for everybody but will focus on narrowing inequalities for those with greatest need.
- We will embed prevention in everything we do. Prevention and early intervention is about enabling people to maintain the best health possible all the way through life.
- Partners will work together to keep the most vulnerable members of our community safe.

What is...

Health inequalities: Avoidable and unfair differences in health between different communities or groups of people.

Prevention: stopping something which may be harmful from happening.

Life chances – these are the opportunities we have to improve our quality of life.

Early intervention: Recognising and addressing difficulties faced by children, adults and families and tackling these issues early before they become more ingrained problems

What is...

Integrated commissioning:
Working in partnership to identify need in our communities and ensuring there are services in place to meet those needs.

Anchor institutions:
these are large organisations like hospitals, local councils, and universities whose long-term sustainability is connected to the wellbeing of the populations they serve. These organisations can have a significant influence on the health and wellbeing of a local community.

Policy Context

The Health and Social Care Act (2012)⁶ requires local authorities to set up HWBs as a council committee, with some mandatory membership. Details of the Sefton HWB board can be found here⁷. The HWB can use its powers and duties to facilitate integrated commissioning and decision-making, which align with patterns of local health and health-related needs.

A recent review of HWBs by the Local Government Association clearly supports the continuing relevance and status of HWBs, JSNA and 'Living Well in Sefton 2020-2025' as essential and powerful drivers of population health improvement.⁸ This is supported by the NHS Long term Plan.

The NHS Long Term Plan stresses the importance of prevention, addressing health inequalities, recognising NHS organisations as 'anchor institutions' and emphasising greater collaboration and integration at a borough level through the new NHS model⁹. This is also referenced for Sefton in the recently published Sefton2gether Plan.¹⁰

We recognise the importance of economic growth to Sefton in helping to improve people's health and wellbeing. The National Industrial Strategy¹¹ includes a 'Grand Challenge' to ensure that people can enjoy at least five extra healthy, independent years of life by 2035, while narrowing the gap between the experience of the richest and poorest. Technological innovation is presented as a key means of achieving this mission, for example improving digital skills and access.

The two-way relationship between good work and good health is also a central theme in the Liverpool City Region Local Industrial Strategy, which is currently in development.¹²

The Health and Wellbeing Strategy will be delivered through a number of local plans, strategies and boards including;

- Sefton2gether – Sefton's NHS 5 Year Plan
- Children and Young Peoples Plan
- Early Help Strategy
- Emotional Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- All Age Carer Strategy (currently in development)
- Sefton Older Peoples Strategy
- The Integrated Commissioning Group work programme (currently in development)
- Children and Young Peoples Partnership Board
- Adults Forum
- Health Protection Forum
- Local Safeguarding Boards


Further details on these plans and strategies can be found here¹³



Health in Sefton


The Four Pillars of Population Health

Our Health Behaviours and Lifestyles

 11.1% of Sefton residents smoke, the lowest rate in the Liverpool City Region

Two thirds of Sefton residents meet the Chief Medical Officer's recommendations for physical activity




 Sefton is amongst the 10% of English authorities with the highest rates of alcohol specific hospital admissions

Almost three quarters of adults in Sefton are overweight or obese



Priorities and practical solutions The Places and Communities We Live In, and With

 1 in 5 Sefton residents live in the most deprived 10% of England (approximately 88,000 residents).

1 in 25 Sefton residents live in the least deprived 10% of England (10,000 residents)

Life expectancy is 9 years lower for men and 8 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Sefton than in the least deprived areas.

Sefton's most deprived populations also spend, on average, 18 years less in good health than those in the most affluent areas.



The Wider Determinants of Health

 There are approximately 272 fast food outlets in Sefton, 1 for every 1,000 residents. Outlets tend to be concentrated amongst Sefton's most deprived communities.

Sefton has 27 Municipal Parks, 135 Other Parks and Greenspaces and 38 Outdoor Gyms.



Air pollution is thought to be responsible for 3.8% of Sefton's deaths

An Integrated Health and Care System

The increasing complexity of people's health calls for a more joined up, person-centred health care system.

An estimated 27% of Sefton residents have two or more chronic conditions and 17% have 3 or more chronic conditions.

Multimorbidity is projected to be highest in areas with an above average older person population and areas of high deprivation.

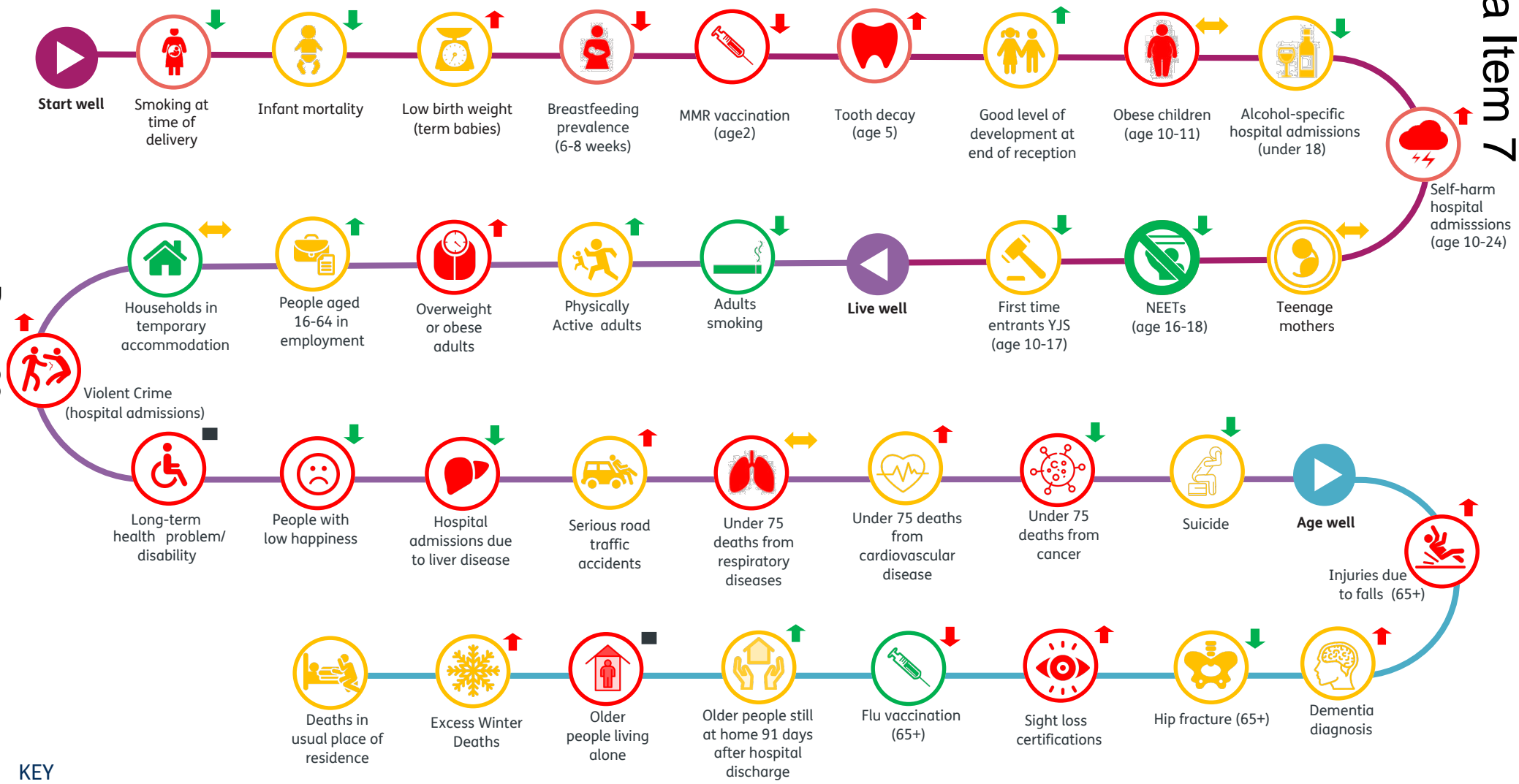


Sefton's Health & Wellbeing Across the Lifecourse

Current Population 275,396

- 53,000 Under 18s
- 157,531 18 - 64
- 64,032 65+

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KEY

Statistical significance to England:

- Better
- No different
- Worse

Direction of travel:

- Improved since last period
- Similar to last period
- Worse than last period
- No comparator

Based on a template from Halton Public Health Intelligence Team and work produced by Centre for Public Health, Liverpool John Moores University. Icons made by Flaticon and available here: www.flaticon.com

Our ambitions across all ages

We need to focus on the factors, structures and conditions that shape our opportunities for good health throughout life. The way we do this is to take a life course approach, where the emphasis is on healthy ageing from before birth to the end of life, and on the range of interventions that support this. Our approach to a healthy life is as follows;

Start well

Where we lay the foundations for a healthy life, usually up to age 18, but includes children up to age 25 years for some children with additional needs.

Live well

Where we ensure people have every opportunity to live a healthy life

Age well

Where we consider the factors that help keep us healthy as we get older

All age

Where our ambitions for Sefton apply to all age groups

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Start Well

Children's life chances and health risks are different, even from before birth. Levelling the playing field from birth to starting school and beyond is one of the best ways to improve population health and narrow the gap in health experienced between our most and least vulnerable communities. There are many times in our lives where the right support and opportunities can make big differences to life chances.

- In Sefton we are committed to having children and young people who are heard, happy, healthy and achieving.
- The first 1001 days are a unique window of opportunity to support each child to develop their language, thinking, emotional and social abilities as fully possible. These are the basic tools children need so they can get the most out of school and other areas of life.
- In the last year there were more than 300 babies born to women who smoke. In some Sefton communities, around one in six women smoke in pregnancy and many more babies and children do not grow up in smoke-free homes.
- Health and wellbeing in pregnancy can also be harmed by substance use, obesity, poor nutrition, poor mental health and indoor and outdoor air pollution.
- We need to improve health and wellbeing through things like the promotion of breastfeeding, increasing vaccination, preventing accidents, reducing exposure to air pollution and passive smoking, and improving access to healthy housing and healthy eating, including addressing the impact of food poverty.
- Good emotional wellbeing for children, parents and carers starts with feeling safe, secure and confident. When these core elements of wellbeing are shaky or missing altogether, making progress towards being ready for school at age 4 or 5 becomes an even bigger challenge. This might be due to the impact of mental health problems during pregnancy or in the first



year following the birth of a child, current or historic abuse or adverse childhood experiences, or threats to safety and security because of problems with money or housing.

- Universal advice and support for all is essential and helps parents, carers and children alike to grow in confidence during the crucial, pre-school years when their brains are developing very rapidly. Universal services, for example health visiting, are responsive to the needs of families, increasing and reducing support where required. This ensures that additional needs and vulnerabilities are spotted early, and children and families are provided with appropriate and timely support.
- For older children, transitions into primary, secondary school and into further education and training are key stepping stones. If these transitions are good, young people can more easily achieve their full potential. In Sefton, there is a gap in educational attainment between children from disadvantaged backgrounds and their more advantaged peers. Amongst older children in Sefton, poor mental wellbeing, bullying, loneliness, self-harm, time out of education, exposure to crime and access to mental health services are concerns. Differences in physical health, including obesity exist along lines of income and social deprivation.
- Some groups are also at greater risk of having worse health and wellbeing outcomes as children and young adults, for example individuals with learning or other disabilities, children from groups that may be at higher risk of exclusion, and children who identify as LGBT, or children who need to be cared for by others.

Our ambitions for Start Well are:

- Every child will achieve the best start in their first 1001 days
- Education and training will enable every young person to unlock the door to more choices and opportunities
- Every child and young person will have a successful transition to adulthood, including young carers, and children with special educational needs and disabilities for whom transition extends to 25 years.

Live Well



As adults our health related behaviours can become a more prominent concern for our long-term health. People living within the constraints of a low income, and other social disadvantages are more likely to develop chronic conditions such as obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, or high cholesterol.

This group is also more likely to develop serious long-term, conditions like, serious mental health problems, cancer, heart disease, stroke or lung disease earlier in life (pre-retirement age) and develop more than one condition. In addition, the amount of ill-health and reduced quality of life due to issues like back pain problems, and chronic stress are all part of this picture. Mental wellbeing for middle-aged men is also a growing cause of concern.

- Challenges from poor quality or uncertain employment, debt, caring for children and/or older relatives and physical health problems increase the risk of poor mental wellbeing and mental health conditions.
- People with mental illness are more likely to have higher rates of poverty, homelessness, prison, social isolation and unemployment and their needs often tend to be more complex and urgent.
- Alcohol and drug use, smoking and gambling can negatively affect our own health, and the wellbeing of our family and friends. The consequences can be more serious for people living in poverty and with limited networks of support.
- People with few barriers to making healthy choices and changes can benefit from high quality self-care information and services, whereas people facing many more barriers and challenges need more hands-on support
- To make a difference, we need to work together across the public, private, and voluntary community and faith sector to embed prevention into wider strategies such as housing, the economy, the NHS, transport and the local environment, and placing communities at the heart of decision-making.
- Housing, inclusive economic growth, employment, adult learning and training opportunities, healthy high streets and workplaces and person-centred support for carers are key considerations for all, and this can sometimes be summarised as “somewhere to live, someone to love, and something to do’.

Our ambitions for Live Well are:

- Health, care and wellbeing services across the wider system will work together to support individuals, carers, families, and communities
- Everyone has a fulfilling role which can support their needs, with opportunities to contribute, learn and progress
- The wider system has a strong role in prevention, early intervention, health equity, and integrated care so that access and support is available where needed



What is...

Inclusive economic growth: increasing local wealth and ensuring it is distributed fairly across society and creates opportunities for all.

Healthy high streets: using high-streets as a way of supporting the health and wellbeing of local communities, for example through making sure that they are easy to navigate.

Healthy workplaces: Making work an environment that can support the health and wellbeing of employees, for example by making sure there is access to healthy food.

Health equity: ensuring that everyone has fair access to the support they need to keep healthy, by making sure that services meet the needs of all groups of communities.

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Age Well

We know that the proportion of the population that are aged over 65 is increasing in Sefton. We therefore need to consider how we can promote healthy and active ageing locally.

Older people play an important role in our communities, often supporting others through caring roles, and actively engaging with groups and events. However, for some people, growing older brings about increasing dependency and social isolation, reflecting the broader picture of health inequalities experienced in Sefton.

- Getting older is associated with an increased risk of long-term health conditions. Many people will develop multiple health problems such as; stroke, dementia and mental health problems. They are also at increased risk from infections including influenza and pneumonia and problems with sight and hearing. These factors can contribute to a high rate of frailty and falls and the loss of independence that can result.
- As people get older there are wider factors that can pose a risk to health and wellbeing, these include; care arrangements, time in hospital, hazards at home, access to suitable transport, low income, and demanding caring roles. Loss and loneliness can have a dramatic effect on health, wellbeing and independence.
- Considerations for this age group include how the health, care and wellbeing services work together, and recognising the ongoing value of preventative care for example to minimise the risk of a serious fall, infection or complication from a long-term condition.

- The social, and built environment are also a key consideration. Affordable housing that is easy to keep warm, is age and disability friendly and in a good state of repair can improve health and well-being. This enables people to maintain their independence for as long as possible. These spaces should be co-designed to create disability and age friendly places that are safe and easy to navigate for all ages.
- Wherever possible, indoor and outdoor spaces should be co-designed with the needs of older people in mind. These spaces should be suitable for all ages to provide safe spaces which are easier to navigate and move around, allowing people to be active and socialise together.
- Getting around is important for all aspects of active ageing. Transport in Sefton must reflect the needs of older people and people with disabilities.
- Within Sefton we have a range of natural assets, including the coastline and forests, as well as parks and greenspaces. Supporting older people, as well as other age groups, to make use of these spaces maximises opportunities to be physically active and can help to strengthen our communities by fostering social interaction between people of all ages.

Our ambitions for Age Well are:

- Older people will stay active, connected and involved by being part of strong communities in which they are important.
- As people grow older, they will be provided with support, tailored to their needs which respects their dignity and individual preferences, including in relation to caring responsibilities.
- Our communities and the built environment will meet the needs of people as they get older, through age and disability friendly towns, communities, services, housing and transport.



All Age Ambitions

Some of our actions in Sefton will cross all age groups, because there are many factors that influence our health across the life course, such as our mental wellbeing. We know, for example, that many adult mental health problems can start in childhood and continue throughout life. This section sets-out actions that should be adopted across Sefton to address the priorities identified within this report.

We understand that places and communities have assets that are valued, and the wider system has a role in supporting this through enhancing our environment, such as promoting active and sustainable travel. By working together we can:

- Enable everyone to maximise their capabilities and control over their lives.
- Empower people through access to the right information and guidance, to allow them to make informed decisions across the whole life course
- Ensure a healthy standard of living, including healthy homes, streets, schools, workplaces and leisure time, therefore helping to make the healthy choices the easy choices.

Our All Age ambition is that:

- The places where we live will make it easy to be healthy and happy, support our physical and mental health, with opportunities for better health and wellbeing on our doorstep, where social connections are encouraged across all generations.

What is...

Life course approach:

Supporting people throughout their lives from birth until old age, with the understanding that people have different needs as they age.



How will we make this happen?

The HWB and its partners are responsible for delivering this strategy.
The HWB will do this by:

- Meeting regularly as a board and holding each other and wider partners to account
- Having a forward plan to ensure all elements of the strategy are progressed and reported on
- Reporting on progress in delivering against the key ambitions as outlined in the strategy
- Providing robust challenge and support to partners in relation to these key ambitions to ensure that all opportunities to improve health and wellbeing further and faster are maximised.
- Having a performance monitoring framework in place, drawn from the key national outcomes frameworks (NHS, Adult Social Care, Childrens, Public Health, Marmot) (REF14) which the HWB will scrutinise to ensure the strategy is delivering against the vision and ambitions.

- Reviewing progress on an annual basis and updating ambitions as required
- Utilising the work of Sefton Healthwatch to ensure the voice of Sefton residents remains central in delivering the ambitions of the strategy.
- Reporting to key stakeholders and residents of Sefton on a regular basis

Key actions the HWB will take: -

- It will hold the health and social care system and wider partners to account.
- There will be a performance monitoring framework which will provide assurance of impact and progress to the Health and Wellbeing Board
- The activity of the HWB will be reviewed regularly, ambitions updated, and progress will be shared with key stakeholders and Sefton residents

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Chinese: 该文件可以以其他语言呈现，也可提供大字版本，录音带和盲文。

Portuguese: Este documento também pode ser feito disponível em outros idiomas, impressão grande, fita de áudio e Braille.

Arabic: نيفوف كمل لى لى ارب عقيرطب ءبوتكم ءو نى ءوص طيرش ىل عو ءع ءوبطم ءزى بك ءخس نبو ءى ءرأ ءا ءلب ءم ءرم ءقى ءولا ءه ءح اءا ءس اءى ءكمى

Russian: Этот документ также доступен на других языках, большим шрифтом, в виде аудио записи и шрифтом Брайля.

Agenda Item 8

Report to:	Cabinet Council	Date of Meeting:	5 December 2019 23 January 2020
Subject:	Programme of Meetings – 2020/21 Municipal Year		
Report of:	Chief Legal and Democratic Officer	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 approval of a Programme of Meetings for the 2020/21 Municipal Year.

Recommendation:

Cabinet

That the Programme of Meetings for the Cabinet, Public Engagement and Consultation Panel, Sefton Safer Communities Partnership and the Health and Wellbeing Board for 2020/21 as set out in Annexes A and D of the report be approved.

Council

That:

1. the Programme of Meetings for the Council, Member Briefing Sessions; Regulatory Committees; and Overview and Scrutiny Committees for 2020/21 as set out in Annexes B and C of the report be approved; and
2. the Programme of Meetings for the Cabinet, Public Engagement and Consultation Panel, Sefton Safer Communities Partnership and the Health and Wellbeing Board for 2020/21 as set out in Annexes A and D of the report be noted.

Reasons for the Recommendation:

To enable the business of the Council and its various Committees/bodies to be conducted during the 2020/21 Municipal Year.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None. The Council is required to produce a programme of meetings.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

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(A) Revenue Costs – None

(B) Capital Costs – None

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: Not applicable
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: Not applicable
Commission, broker and provide core services: Not applicable
Place – leadership and influencer: The Programme of Meetings for 2020/21 will be published on the Council's website for the benefit of the residents of Sefton and the wider general public. This will raise awareness of the Council's political management system and allow the opportunity for the public to engage in the Council's democratic processes.
Drivers of change and reform: Not applicable
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: Not applicable
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 (FD5856/19) has been consulted and notes there are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

The Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD4090/19) is the author of this report.

Head of Corporate Resources
Head of Communities

Head of Strategic Support
Chief Planning Officer

(B) External Consultations

Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner

Implementation Date for the Decision

In respect of the Programme of Meetings for the Cabinet, Public Engagement and Consultation Panel, Sefton Safer Communities Partnership and the Health and Wellbeing Board the implementation date will be upon the expiry of the call-in period of the minutes of the Cabinet meeting.

In respect of the Programme of Meetings for the Council, Member Briefing Sessions; Regulatory Committees; and Overview and Scrutiny Committees immediately following the Council meeting.

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Appendices:

Annex A - Programme of Meetings for the Cabinet in 2020/21

Annex B - Programme of Meetings for the Council, Members' Briefing Sessions and Regulatory Committees in 2020/21

Annex C - Programme of Meetings for the Overview and Scrutiny Committees in 2020/21

Annex D - Programme of Meetings for the Public Engagement and Consultation Panel, Sefton Safer Communities Partnership and the Health and Wellbeing Board in 2020/21.

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 The Council is required to establish a programme of meetings for the 2020/21 Municipal Year.
- 1.2 Annexes are attached to the report setting out programme.
- 1.3 Similar to the arrangements put in place last year once the programme of meetings are approved, an "in-house" diary will be produced for Members of the Council.

2. Programme of Meetings 2020/21

- 2.1 The key principles of the Programme of Meetings are as follows:

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- Five Ordinary Council Meetings to be held every 8 weeks on a Thursday commencing at 6.30 p.m. plus the Budget Council Meeting to be held on 25 February 2021.
- Council will not meet on the same day as Cabinet.
- Members' Briefing Sessions to be held at 5.00 p.m. prior to the five Ordinary Council Meetings.
- No meetings will be held:
 - In the period between Christmas and New Year (December 2020/January 2021)
 - In April 2021 except for the meetings of the Planning Committee, Cabinet and Council.
- As far as possible no meetings will be held during the school half term holiday weeks.
- The venues for all meetings alternate between Bootle and Southport Town Halls.
- Cabinet Meetings to be held on a Thursday at 10.00 a.m. The first meeting to be held on 28 May 2020.
- Planning Committee to meet every four weeks on a Wednesday, commencing at 6.30 p.m.
- Planning Visiting Panel to meet 2 days prior to each meeting of the Planning Committee to undertake site visits as agreed by the Committee.
- Each of the 4 Overview and Scrutiny Committees to meet bi monthly, 5 times during the year commencing at 6.30 p.m. – the main Overview and Scrutiny work will be done by Working Groups established on an ad hoc basis.
- Special meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services) to be held on 9 February 2021 to scrutinise the Cabinet budget process.
- Overview and Scrutiny Management Board to meet 5 times per year, commencing at 4.30 p.m.
- Licensing and Regulatory Committee to meet quarterly on a Monday commencing at 6.30 p.m.
- Meetings of the Licensing Sub-Committee to be convened as and when required.
- Audit and Governance Committee to meet every quarter (4 meetings per year) on a Wednesday commencing at 3.00 p.m. in order to meet statutory requirements etc.

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- Pay and Grading Committee to be convened as and when required.
- Health and Wellbeing Board to meet 4 times per year.
- The dates for the Public Engagement and Consultation Panel, which are not public meetings are included in the Corporate Calendar.

3. Calendar of Meetings

- 3.1 A copy of the Calendar of Meetings for 2020/21 and associated annexes are attached.

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SEFTON COUNCIL CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2020/21

MAY 2020		
FRI	1	
SAT	2	
SUN	3	
MON	4	
TUE	5	
WED	6	
THU	7	COUNCIL, LIVERPOOL CITY REGION MAYOR, MERSEYSIDE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER AND FORMBY PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS
FRI	8	MAY BANK HOLIDAY/VE DAY
SAT	9	
SUN	10	
MON	11	
TUE	12	
WED	13	
THU	14	
FRI	15	10.00 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION PANEL (B)
SAT	16	
SUN	17	
MON	18	
TUE	19	6.00 ANNUAL COUNCIL (VENUE TO BE DETERMINED)
WED	20	
THU	21	6.30 ADJOURNED ANNUAL COUNCIL (B)
FRI	22	
SAT	23	
SUN	24	
MON	25	SPRING BANK HOLIDAY SCHOOL HALF-TERM HOLIDAY WEEK
TUE	26	
WED	27	6.30 MANDATORY PLANNING COMMITTEE TRAINING SESSION (B)
THU	28	10.00 CABINET (B)
FRI	29	
SAT	30	
SUN	31	
MAY 2020		

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JUNE 2020		
MON	1	10.00 PLANNING VISITING PANEL (B)
TUE	2	
WED	3	6.30 PLANNING COMMITTEE (S)
THU	4	
FRI	5	
SAT	6	
SUN	7	
MON	8	
TUE	9	
WED	10	2.00 HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD (B)
THU	11	10.00 SEFTON SAFER COMMUNITIES PARTNERSHIP (B)
FRI	12	
SAT	13	
SUN	14	
MON	15	6.30 LICENSING AND REGULATORY (B)
TUE	16	6.30 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (REGULATORY, COMPLIANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES) (S)
WED	17	
THU	18	
FRI	19	
SAT	20	
SUN	21	
MON	22	
TUE	23	4.30 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD (B) 6.30 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (ADULT SOCIAL CARE) (B)
WED	24	3.00 AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE (B)
THU	25	10.00 CABINET (S)
FRI	26	
SAT	27	
SUN	28	
MON	29	10.00 PLANNING VISITING PANEL (B)
TUE	30	6.30 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (REGENERATION AND SKILLS) (B)
JUNE 2020		

Agenda Item 8

JULY 2020		
WED	1	5.00 PLANNING TRAINING SESSION (B) 6.30 PLANNING COMMITTEE (B)
THU	2	
FRI	3	
SAT	4	
SUN	5	
MON	6	
TUE	7	6.30 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND SAFEGUARDING) (B)
WED	8	
THU	9	
FRI	10	10.00 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION PANEL (B)
SAT	11	
SUN	12	
MON	13	
TUE	14	
WED	15	
THU	16	5.00 MEMBERS' BRIEFING (S) 6.30 COUNCIL (S)
FRI	17	
SAT	18	
SUN	19	
MON	20	
TUE	21	
WED	22	3.00 AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE (B) (SPECIAL MEETING FOR APPROVAL OF 2019/20 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS)
THU	23	
FRI	24	
SAT	25	
SUN	26	
MON	27	10.00 PLANNING VISITING PANEL (B)
TUE	28	
WED	29	5.00 PLANNING TRAINING SESSION (S) 6.30 PLANNING COMMITTEE (S)
THU	30	10.00 CABINET (B)
FRI	31	
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JULY 2020		

Agenda Item 8

AUGUST 2020		
SAT	1	
SUN	2	
MON	3	
TUE	4	
WED	5	
THU	6	
FRI	7	
SAT	8	
SUN	9	
MON	10	
TUE	11	
WED	12	
THU	13	
FRI	14	
SAT	15	
SUN	16	
MON	17	
TUE	18	
WED	19	
THU	20	
FRI	21	
SAT	22	
SUN	23	
MON	24	10.00 PLANNING VISITING PANEL (B)
TUE	25	
WED	26	5.00 PLANNING TRAINING SESSION (B) 6.30 PLANNING COMMITTEE (B)
THU	27	
FRI	28	
SAT	29	
SUN	30	
MON	31	SUMMER BANK HOLIDAY
AUGUST 2020		

Agenda Item 8

SEPTEMBER 2020		
TUE	1	6.30 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (ADULT SOCIAL CARE) (S)
WED	2	
THU	3	10.00 CABINET (S)
FRI	4	
SAT	5	
SUN	6	
MON	7	6.30 LICENSING AND REGULATORY (S)
TUE	8	4.30 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD (B) 6.30 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (REGULATORY, COMPLIANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES) (B)
WED	9	2.00 HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD (B)
THU	10	10.00 SEFTON SAFER COMMUNITIES PARTNERSHIP (B)
FRI	11	10.00 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION PANEL (B)
SAT	12	
SUN	13	
MON	14	
TUE	15	6.30 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (REGENERATION AND SKILLS) (S)
WED	16	3.00 AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE (S)
THU	17	5.00 MEMBERS' BRIEFING (B) 6.30 COUNCIL (B)
FRI	18	
SAT	19	
SUN	20	
MON	21	10.00 PLANNING VISITING PANEL (B)
TUE	22	6.30 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND SAFEGUARDING) (S)
WED	23	5.00 PLANNING TRAINING SESSION (S) 6.30 PLANNING COMMITTEE (S)
THU	24	
FRI	25	
SAT	26	
SUN	27	
MON	28	
TUE	29	
WED	30	
SEPTEMBER 2020		

Agenda Item 8

OCTOBER 2020		
THU	1	10.00 CABINET (B)
FRI	2	
SAT	3	
SUN	4	
MON	5	
TUE	6	
WED	7	
THU	8	
FRI	9	
SAT	10	
SUN	11	
MON	12	
TUE	13	6.30 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (ADULT SOCIAL CARE) (B)
WED	14	
THU	15	
FRI	16	
SAT	17	
SUN	18	
MON	19	10.00 PLANNING VISITING PANEL (B)
TUE	20	6.30 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (REGULATORY, COMPLIANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES) (S)
WED	21	5.00 PLANNING TRAINING SESSION (B) 6.30 PLANNING COMMITTEE (B)
THU	22	
FRI	23	
SAT	24	
SUN	25	
MON	26	SCHOOL HALF-TERM HOLIDAY WEEK
TUE	27	
WED	28	
THU	29	
FRI	30	
SAT	31	
OCTOBER 2020		

Agenda Item 8

NOVEMBER 2020		
SUN	1	
MON	2	
TUE	3	6.30 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (REGENERATION AND SKILLS) (B)
WED	4	
THU	5	10.00 CABINET (S)
FRI	6	
SAT	7	
SUN	8	REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY
MON	9	
TUE	10	4.30 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD (B) 6.30 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND SAFEGUARDING) (B)
WED	11	
THU	12	
FRI	13	10.00 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION PANEL (B)
SAT	14	
SUN	15	
MON	16	10.00 PLANNING VISITING PANEL (B)
TUE	17	
WED	18	5.00 PLANNING TRAINING SESSION (S) 6.30 PLANNING COMMITTEE (S)
THU	19	5.00 MEMBERS' BRIEFING (S) 6.30 COUNCIL (S)
FRI	20	
SAT	21	
SUN	22	
MON	23	
TUE	24	
WED	25	
THU	26	
FRI	27	
SAT	28	
SUN	29	
MON	30	
NOVEMBER 2020		

Agenda Item 8

DECEMBER 2020		
TUE	1	
WED	2	
THU	3	10.00 CABINET (B)
FRI	4	
SAT	5	
SUN	6	
MON	7	
TUE	8	
WED	9	2.00 HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD (B)
THU	10	10.00 SEFTON SAFER COMMUNITIES PARTNERSHIP (B)
FRI	11	
SAT	12	
SUN	13	
MON	14	10.00 PLANNING VISITING PANEL (B)
TUE	15	
WED	16	3.00 AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE (B) 5.00 PLANNING TRAINING SESSION (B) 6.30 PLANNING COMMITTEE (B)
THU	17	
FRI	18	
SAT	19	
SUN	20	
MON	21	SCHOOL CHRISTMAS BREAK
TUE	22	
WED	23	
THU	24	COUNCIL OFFICES CLOSED
FRI	25	CHRISTMAS DAY
SAT	26	
SUN	27	
MON	28	BANK HOLIDAY
TUE	29	COUNCIL OFFICES CLOSED
WED	30	COUNCIL OFFICES CLOSED
THU	31	COUNCIL OFFICES CLOSED
DECEMBER 2020		

Agenda Item 8

JANUARY 2021		
FRI	1	NEW YEAR'S DAY
SAT	2	
SUN	3	
MON	4	
TUE	5	6.30 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (ADULT SOCIAL CARE) (S)
WED	6	
THU	7	10.00 CABINET (S)
FRI	8	
SAT	9	
SUN	10	
MON	11	6.30 LICENSING AND REGULATORY (B)
TUE	12	4.30 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD (B) 6.30 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (REGULATORY, COMPLIANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES) (B)
WED	13	
THU	14	
FRI	15	10.00 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION PANEL (B)
SAT	16	
SUN	17	
MON	18	10.00 PLANNING VISITING PANEL (B)
TUE	19	6.30 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (REGENERATION AND SKILLS) (S)
WED	20	5.00 PLANNING TRAINING SESSION (S) 6.30 PLANNING COMMITTEE (S)
THU	21	5.00 MEMBERS' BRIEFING (B) 6.30 COUNCIL (B)
FRI	22	
SAT	23	
SUN	24	
MON	25	
TUE	26	6.30 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND SAFEGUARDING) (S)
WED	27	
THU	28	
FRI	29	
SAT	30	
SUN	31	
JANUARY 2021		

Agenda Item 8

FEBRUARY 2021		
MON	1	
TUE	2	
WED	3	
THU	4	10.00 CABINET (B)
FRI	5	
SAT	6	
SUN	7	
MON	8	
TUE	9	6.30 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (REGULATORY, COMPLIANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES) BUDGET MEETING (B)
WED	10	
THU	11	10.00 CABINET (BUDGET) (S)
FRI	12	
SAT	13	
SUN	14	
MON	15	SCHOOL HALF-TERM HOLIDAY WEEK 10.00 PLANNING VISITING PANEL (B)
TUE	16	
WED	17	5.00 PLANNING TRAINING SESSION (B) 6.30 PLANNING COMMITTEE (B)
THU	18	
FRI	19	
SAT	20	
SUN	21	
MON	22	
TUE	23	6.30 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (ADULT SOCIAL CARE) (B)
WED	24	
THU	25	
FRI	26	
SAT	27	
SUN	28	
FEBRUARY 2021		

Agenda Item 8

MARCH 2021		
MON	1	
TUE	2	6.30 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (REGULATORY, COMPLIANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES) (S)
WED	3	
THU	4	10.00 CABINET (B) 6.30 BUDGET COUNCIL (B)
FRI	5	
SAT	6	
SUN	7	
MON	8	
TUE	9	6.30 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (REGENERATION AND SKILLS) (B)
WED	10	2.00 HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD (B)
THU	11	10.00 SEFTON SAFER COMMUNITIES PARTNERSHIP (B)
FRI	12	10.00 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION PANEL (B)
SAT	13	
SUN	14	
MON	15	10.00 PLANNING VISITING PANEL (B) 6.30 LICENSING AND REGULATORY (S)
TUE	16	4.30 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD (B) 6.30 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND SAFEGUARDING) (B)
WED	17	3.00 AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE (S) 5.00 PLANNING TRAINING SESSION (S) 6.30 PLANNING COMMITTEE (S)
THU	18	
FRI	19	
SAT	20	
SUN	21	
MON	22	
TUE	23	
WED	24	
THU	25	
FRI	26	
SAT	27	
SUN	28	
MON	29	SCHOOL SPRING HOLIDAY
TUE	30	
WED	31	
MARCH 2021		

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APRIL 2021		
THU	1	10.00 CABINET (S)
FRI	2	GOOD FRIDAY
SAT	3	
SUN	4	EASTER SUNDAY
MON	5	EASTER MONDAY
TUE	6	
WED	7	
THU	8	
FRI	9	
SAT	10	
SUN	11	
MON	12	10.00 PLANNING VISITING PANEL (B)
TUE	13	
WED	14	5.00 PLANNING TRAINING SESSION (B) 6.30 PLANNING COMMITTEE (B)
THU	15	
FRI	16	
SAT	17	
SUN	18	
MON	19	
TUE	20	
WED	21	
THU	22	5.00 MEMBERS' BRIEFING (S) 6.30 COUNCIL (S)
FRI	23	
SAT	24	
SUN	25	
MON	26	
TUE	27	
WED	28	
THU	29	
FRI	30	
APRIL 2021		

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MAY 2021		
SAT	1	
SUN	2	
MON	3	MAY BANK HOLIDAY
TUE	4	
WED	5	
THU	6	
FRI	7	
SAT	8	
SUN	9	
MON	10	
TUE	11	6.00 ANNUAL COUNCIL (VENUE TO BE DETERMINED)
WED	12	
THU	13	6.30 ADJOURNED ANNUAL COUNCIL (B)
FRI	14	
SAT	15	
SUN	16	
MON	17	
TUE	18	
WED	19	
THU	20	
FRI	21	
SAT	22	
SUN	23	
MON	24	
TUE	25	
WED	26	6.30 MANDATORY PLANNING COMMITTEE TRAINING SESSION (B)
THU	27	10.00 CABINET (B)
FRI	28	
SAT	29	
SUN	30	
MON	31	SPRING BANK HOLIDAY SCHOOL HALF-TERM HOLIDAY WEEK
MAY 2021		

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ANNEX A
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF SEFTON
PROGRAMME OF CABINET MEETINGS - 2020/2021

Meeting	Day	Time	Venue	2020								2021					
				May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	
CABINET	Thur.	10.00 a.m.	B	28		30				1		3		4	4		27
			S		25			3		5		7	11		1		

Key to Venues:

B - Bootle Town Hall

S - Southport Town Hall

ANNEX B
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF SEFTON
PROGRAMME OF COUNCIL, MEMBERS' BRIEFING SESSIONS AND REGULATORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS ETC. - 2020/2021

Meeting	Day	Time	Venue	2020								2021						
				May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	
COUNCIL	Thur.	6.30 p.m.	B	21←					17				21		4→		11↓ Tue	
			S	19↑			16				19						22	13°
MEMBERS' BRIEFING SESSIONS Prior to each Ordinary Council Meeting	Thur.	5.00 p.m.	B						17				21					
			S				16				19					22		
AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE	Wed.	3.00 p.m.	B		24	22						16						
			S						16						17			
DEALS (FOR PERSONNEL ISSUES) - as and when required	Thur.	-																
PLANNING AND REGULATORY COMMITTEE	Mon.	6.30 p.m.	B		15								11					
			S						7							15		
LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE - as and when required			B															
			S															
PLANNING COMMITTEE	Wed.	6.30 p.m.	B	↑27		1	26			21		16		17		14	↓26	
			S			3	29		23		18			20		17		
PLANNING VISITING PANEL	Mon	10.00 a.m.	B		1/29	27	24	21	19	16	14	18	15	15	12			
PAY AND GRADING COMMITTEE – as and when required																		

↑ Annual Meeting 2020/21 - commences at 6.00 p.m. (Tuesday) (Venue to be determined)

← Adjourned Annual Meeting - Appointment of Committees etc. for 2020/21

→ Budget Meeting

↑Mandatory Planning Committee

° Annual Meeting 2021/2022 - commences at 6.00 p.m. (Tuesday) (Venue to be determined)

↓ Adjourned Annual Meeting - Appointment of Committees etc. for 2021/2022

ANNEX C
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF SEFTON
PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS FOR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES - 2020/2021
(Tuesday)

Meeting	Venue	2020								2021				
		May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (Adult Social Care) (6.30 p.m.) (Tue)	B		23				13					23		
	S					1				5				
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services) (Tue) (6.30 p.m.)	B					8				12	*9			
	S		16				20					2		
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (Regeneration and Skills) (6.30 p.m.) (Tue)	B		30						3			9		
	S					15				19				
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (Children's Services Safeguarding) (6.30 p.m.) (Tue)	B			7					10			16		
	S					22				26				
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD (4.30 p.m.) (Tue)	B		23			8			10		12		16	
	S													

* Special meeting to consider Budget proposals.

ANNEX D
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF SEFTON
PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS FOR PARTNERSHIP MEETINGS- 2020/2021

Meeting	Day	Time	Venue	2020								2021				
				May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION PANEL ^	Fri	10.00 a.m.	B	15		10		11		13		15		12		
			S													
SEFTON SAFER COMMUNITIES PARTNERSHIP	Thu	10.00 a.m.	B		11			10			10			11		
			S													
HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD	Wed.	2.00 p.m.	B		10			9			9			10		
			S													

Meetings video conferenced to Southport Town Hall

Agenda Item 9

Report to:	Audit and Governance Committee Council	Date of Meeting:	18 December 2019 23 January 2020
Subject:	Submission of Overview and Scrutiny Working Group Final Reports to Council		
Report of:	Chief Legal and Democratic Officer	Wards Affected:	All
Cabinet Portfolio:	Adult Social Care Children, Schools and Safeguarding Communities and Housing Health and Wellbeing Locality Services Planning and Building Control Regeneration and Skills Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services		
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

To seek approval of the submission of Overview and Scrutiny Working Group Final Reports and recommendations to Cabinet and then Council for final approval.

Recommendations:

That Overview and Scrutiny Working Group Final Reports and recommendations be submitted to Cabinet and then Council for final approval and that the Constitution be amended accordingly.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

To comply with decisions of the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

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

No alternative options have been considered.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

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(A) **Revenue Costs** – see above

(B) **Capital Costs** – see above

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets): None
Legal Implications: The Council should have regard to statutory guidance and should follow the guidance unless there is good reason not to do so.
Equality Implications: There are no equality implications.

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: None directly applicable to this report.
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: None directly applicable to this report
Commission, broker and provide core services: The role that overview and scrutiny can play in holding an authority's decision makers to account makes it fundamentally important to the successful functioning of local democracy.
Place – leadership and influencer: None directly applicable to this report.
Drivers of change and reform: None directly applicable to this report.
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: None directly applicable to this report.
Greater income for social investment: None directly applicable to this report.
Cleaner Greener: None directly applicable to this report.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Head of Corporate Resources (FD5878 /19) has been consulted and notes the report indicates no direct financial implications arising for the Council. The Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD4062 /19) is the author of the report.

Strategic Leadership Board

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

The Council's four Overview and Scrutiny Committees

(B) External Consultations

Not applicable

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Council meeting.

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

Appendices:

No appendices are attached

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Government made a commitment to produce updated statutory Scrutiny Guidance in response to a Communities and Local Government Select Committee report into the “Effectiveness of Local Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committees”.
- 1.2 Statutory Guidance was published on 7 May 2019. Local authorities and Combined Authorities must have regard to the Statutory Guidance when exercising their functions; and the phrase ‘must have regard’, when used in this context, does not mean that the sections of statutory guidance have to be followed in every detail, but that they should be followed unless there is a good reason not to in a particular case.
- 1.3 A report on the Guidance was considered and approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees during the October/November 2019 committee cycle.

2. Submission of Overview and Scrutiny Working Group Final Reports to Council

- 2.1 One section of the guidance related to maintaining the interest of full Council in the work of Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
- 2.2 As Members will be aware, at present the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees submit an Annual Report to Council during the July cycle of meetings.
- 2.3 Currently, Overview and Scrutiny Working Group Final Reports and recommendations are submitted to Cabinet for approval. However, the Guidance indicated that to ensure Council plays a greater role in scrutiny functions then Overview and Scrutiny Working Group Final Reports and recommendations should be submitted to Council rather than solely to the Cabinet.
- 2.4 The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees approved the suggestion made in the Guidance that

Agenda Item 9

Overview and Scrutiny Working Group Final Reports and recommendations be submitted to Cabinet and then Council for final approval.

- 2.5 To enable this change to be implemented the Audit and Governance Committee and Council are requested to approve the decision taken by the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Report to:	Council	Date of Meeting:	23rd January 2020
Subject:	Senior Management Arrangements		
Report of:	Chief Executive Chief Personnel Officer	Wards Affected:	N/A
Cabinet Portfolio:	Corporate Resources/Chief Executive		
Is this a Key Decision:	Yes	Included in Forward Plan:	Yes
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

The Council's Pay Policy provides that Full Council have an opportunity to vote on the proposed remuneration for any posts which have an annual salary of over £100,000.

Cabinet on 5th December 2019 approved changes in senior management within the Council which provide for the formation of a revised Senior Management structure reporting to the Chief Executive and certain and specific new posts.

As a result of those changes, remuneration over £100,000 for these new posts is recommended to be approved as detailed in this report.

Recommendation(s):

1. That Full Council approves the remuneration for the posts of Executive Director Adult Social Care and Health, Executive Director of Children's Social Care, and Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services, all to be at HAY 1 level.
2. That in accordance with the existing Pay Policy, that where required in terms of recruitment, the Chief Executive and Chief Personnel Officer be authorised to provide a market supplement to attract suitable candidates where necessary.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

As would be expected the demands and challenges faced by local government and Sefton MBC continue to increase and evolve, particularly in respect of Social Care, therefore it is essential that the senior management structure within the Council reflects this. These proposals also coincide with the recruitment of the new Chief Executive. As such this Senior Management Structure which will enable the delivery of the Core Purpose and Council objectives at both an operational and strategic level.

The new posts proposed have been through the recognised Job Evaluation process and this has determined the grade applicable. As a result, remuneration over £100,000 per

Agenda Item 10

annum is provided for three Executive Director posts within the Authority and this will ensure that the Authority recruits and retains an appropriate calibre of individuals in respect of these key posts.

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

To not approve the level of remuneration would mean that the Authority could not implement the proposed structure. This in turn would mean that the ability of the council to deliver its core purpose and meet the increased demands, especially in respect of Social Care would be compromised. In addition, lower salaries would place the Council at risk of not attracting and recruiting appropriate individuals into appropriate key posts

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

The increased costs of the substantive posts in this structure amount to £0.175m. It is proposed the cost associated with the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (£0.027m) be met from existing budgets, whilst the additional costs associated with the Executive Directors of Adult Social Care and Health and Children's Social Care and Education (£0.149m) will be met from within the councils 2020/21 budget and will be funded through the additional resources allocated in the recent spending review.

(B) Capital Costs

There are no capital costs arising from these proposals

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):
Normal HR processes will be followed which will include appropriate consultation and the financial implications are as set out within the report
Legal Implications:
Changes will be made in accordance with the Council's constitution and processes.
Equality Implications:
There are no equality implications.

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: The structure will enable continuing close focus to protect the most vulnerable
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: The structure will provide for continuing good work in this respect to enable strategic

delivery
Commission, broker and provide core services: This aspect will be strengthened by the new management structure
Place – leadership and influencer: A focus will continue in Place leadership and influencing allowing the designation of a particular Strategic Director
Drivers of change and reform: The will be enhanced by the adoption of a strategic approach
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: This structure will enable close focus on this objective with a particular strategic lead
Greater income for social investment: This will be enhanced by the strategic changes
Cleaner Greener Along with other initiatives this will be strengthened by closer reporting ties

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Head of Corporate Resources (FD 5915/20) and Chief Legal & Democratic Officer (LD.4099/20) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

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

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Appendices:

There are no appendices to this report

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Background

1. Cabinet, by virtue of a decision on 5th December, approved a new structure for the Authority at senior level.
2. As a result of the promotion of the Chief Executive from his post of Director of Social Care and Health, changes are necessary to ensure that the Council's core purpose and ongoing priorities are met. Members will be aware that local government continues to change at a pace and the strategic issues that this Council will need to address in order to meet these are ever increasing in both scale and complexity, particularly in respect of Social Care and Health.
3. As approved by Cabinet, a new Strategic Management Structure has been developed and there are some posts which following job evaluation now have salary levels over £100,000.
4. Alterations to posts are either as a result of changes to posts and/or the reforming of posts for the reasons as detailed within the Cabinet report of 5th December 2019.
5. As a result of Cabinet's decision, changes take place in relation to matters which are as follows:

Function of Executive Director Place and Executive Director People posts from two Executive Director posts

These 2 posts are to be formed on the existing terms and conditions of Executive Directors and it is intended that Executive Directors will become focussed upon either People or Place (after consultation) on their existing terms and conditions with a remit to continue without portfolio working as necessary.

Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services

This change takes place as a result of the deletion of the role of Head of Corporate Resources and a desire to place the roles encompassing Finance and Customer Services into a distinct strategic role.

Executive Director – Children's Social Care and Education

This post is newly formed and has taken place as a result of the promotion of the Chief Executive from his existing post and a desire to achieve a particular role for Children related services (Social Care and Education).

Executive Director – Adult Social Care and Health

This post is newly formed and has taken place as a result of the promotion of the Chief Executive from his existing former post and a desire to achieve a particular role for Adult and Health related services.

The Executive Director Posts for Children's Social Care and Education and Adult Social Care and Health, reflect the fact that these 2 services now take up a far larger part of the Councils Activity. In addition these both continue to be subject of

increased regulatory demands, changes to function within the council and increased engagement with partners, hence these proposals. The demands within these 2 services were recognised in the latest government spending round announced in September 2019 that identified the pressure within the services, the need for change and identified additional resources that will accordingly be made available to all councils, including Sefton from 2020/21. An element of this funding will be utilised to support these 2 posts and reflects the Executive function that will be required to support these services over the next 3-5 years.

6. The job descriptions and person specifications for each of the particular roles are attached and in respect of the particular duties for each role, these are as follows:

- **People** - this role will have key accountability for the delivery and strategic development within the Service area which would cover developing resilience in Sefton's communities through prevention and early intervention strategies, support to neighbourhoods, managing community assets and the development of initiatives involving the voluntary sector and partnerships. In addition oversight of universal direct services which enhance the Council's environmental offer and which are capable of generating income for the Council will be provided as will managing the Statutory provisions associated with Public Health, working to directly influence the commissioning of Health services to improve the health of Sefton residents.
- **Place** - this role will have key accountability for the delivery and strategic development within the Service area which would cover Highways and Public Protection, Economic Growth and Housing, Planning, and Commercial Development.

The postholder will therefore be responsible for direction of the Highway Infrastructure Services, Public Protection enforcement, monitoring and inspection services and licensing matters, Economic growth, Housing and Economy and Skills Service. The postholder will also lead Statutory Planning and Building Control initiatives to contribute to sustainable development and manage the Strategic Investment Strategy implementing major commercialisation projects

- **Corporate Resources and Customer Services** – this role will have key accountability and responsibility for the delivery and strategic development within the areas of Legal & Democratic Services, Strategic Support, ICT & Digital, Human Resources, Finance, (including the Section 151 officer), and Facilities Management. The postholder will be responsible for ensuring that the Council complies with legislation and manages regulatory risk associated with its internal activities and services, oversees the Council's Policy, Performance and Communication Systems through the development and delivery of corporate transformation projects, and strategic management of the co-ordination and delivery of high quality wide ranging and comprehensive Corporate Support Services.
- **Children's Social Care and Education** - this role will have key accountability and responsibility for the delivery and strategic development within the area of

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Children's Social Care and Education. The postholder will be responsible for discharging the key duties of the statutory role of Director of Children's Services (Social Care and Education) providing expert strategic advice on statutory functions and professional practice in relation to vulnerable children. This will require collaborative working across the Council and beyond. The postholder will act in the capacity of the Authority's lead officer for Children's Social Care to ensure the strategic planning, design and delivery of that service and ensure agreed outcomes are met consistently, through the provision of universal and targeted services for children, young people and their families that will ensure children are safeguarded and welfare is promoted. The postholder will have a key role in promoting and maintaining Education.

The duties will encompass the development of the local Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and joint health and wellbeing strategy and overseeing the provision of the Schools Functions ensuring Education Excellence for the Borough.

- **Adult Social Care and Health** – this role will have key accountability and responsibility for the delivery and strategic development within the area of Adult Social Care and Health. The postholder will be responsible for discharging the key duties of the statutory role of Director of Adult Services providing strategic leadership to ensure vulnerable adults within the Borough are effectively protected from abuse and harm and to ensure the co-ordination of inter-agency working and the protection of the interests of people whose rights are restricted under the Mental Health Act 1983. The postholder will act in the capacity of the Authority's lead officer for Adult Social care providing strategic leadership to ensure vulnerable adults within the Borough are effectively protected from abuse and harm and to ensure the co-ordination of inter-agency working and ensuring the protection of the interests of people whose rights are restricted under the Mental Health Act ensuring all adults are safeguarded. The postholder will manage a range of operational and specialist service teams covering assessment of need, direct payment services, quality assurance, safeguarding and the commissioning of Day Care, Home Care, Residential, Respite and Carers Services activities.

7. The Council is also continuing to utilise additional temporary capacity. In June 2018 an additional Executive Director was appointed on a temporary basis to support a range of strategic programmes. The Executive Director has successfully led on a number of very high profile and challenging strategic projects, including being the Councils Brexit lead, Borough of Culture and has been involved in a range of Combined Authority matters. Since then the Combined Authority have indicated that they would be willing to provide some revenue funding to support strategic programmes and alongside the Brexit funding which Government made available it is proposed that this post is extended as an Executive Director (HAY 1) for a further 12 months until February 2021.

8. In terms of salaries for the newly created posts, following job evaluation it is proposed to offer a spot salary of HAY 1 which is currently £116,742. It is considered that the operation of spot grades at this level provides clarity in terms of pay costs, consistency and equality across in terms of senior roles. It is

recognised that on some occasions, as with all posts within the Authority, there may be a need for an application of market supplement, however, this would be a matter which would be discussed at each Employment Procedure Committee for each post as necessary.

9. The HAY 1 grading profile defines that roles as a specialist in the field, having wide experience and authoritative command of operations and functions together with a breadth of vision gained from extensive leadership and operating at a level which determines the direction that the Authority takes. In addition, the roles will influence the development of major policies, establishing need, set priorities and formulate objectives for Heads of Service to implement. It is considered that the Executive Director's role is critical to the achievement of the Authorities objectives.
10. The proposed salary has been analysed against comparator information, although it must be appreciated that it is difficult to compare and contrast given the wealth of job titles used and the differences in the functions and responsibilities aligned with other Authorities structures.
11. For comparison purposes at Appendix A, details are provided for other relevant North West Council salaries (along with some other recently advertised posts in other Authorities) for the posts of Section 151 officer, Director of Children's and Director of Adults positions in addition to the salaries offered in recent adverts for similar posts

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APPENDIX A.

SALARY COMPARISONS

Section 151 Officer

<u>Job Title</u>	<u>Organisation Name</u>	<u>Council</u>	<u>Salary Banding £K</u>	<u>Population Circa</u>
Director of Finance & Customer Services	Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council	Unitary	91 - 97	148,942
Director of Resources	Blackpool Council	Unitary	100 - 105	142,100
Director of Corporate Resources	Bolton Council	Metropolitan Borough	106 - 132	285,400
Executive Director Band	Knowsley Council	Metropolitan Borough	106 - 116	147,251
Director of Finance	Oldham Council	Metropolitan Borough	90 - 95	235,623
Director Band	Rochdale MBC	Metropolitan Borough	100 - 128	220,001
Strategic Director of Corporate Services	St Helens Council	Metropolitan Borough	109 - 116	180,049
Director - Resources (Deputy Chief Executive)	Wigan Council	Metropolitan Borough	140 - 155	326,088
Director of Finance & Investment	Wirral Council	Metropolitan Borough	115	323,235

Statutory Director of Children's Services (DCS)

<u>Job Title</u>	<u>Organisation Name</u>	<u>Organisation Type</u>	<u>Salary Banding £K</u>	<u>Population Circa</u>
Director of Children's Services (DCS)	Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council	Unitary	*91 - 97	148,942
Director of Children's Services	Blackpool Council	Unitary	95 - 100	142,100
Director of Children's Services	Halton Borough Council	Unitary	95	128,432
Executive Director Band	Knowsley Council	Metropolitan Borough	106 - 116	147,251
Director Band	Rochdale MBC	Metropolitan Borough	100 - 128	220,001
Director – Pay Band	Wigan Council	Metropolitan Borough	102 - 125	326,088
Corporate Director for Children Services	Wirral Council	Metropolitan Borough	150	323,235

* Other Allowances payable in addition

Statutory Director of Adult Social Services (DASS)

<u>Job Title</u>	<u>Organisation Name</u>	<u>Council</u>	<u>Salary Banding £K</u>	<u>Population Circa</u>
Director of Adults & Prevention (DASS)	Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council	Unitary	*91 – 97	148,942
Director of Adult Services	Blackpool Council	Unitary	95 – 100	142,100
Executive Director Band	Knowsley Council	Metropolitan Borough	106 – 116	147,251
Executive Director - Adult Services and Health & Wellbeing	Lancashire County Council	County	134	1,210,053
MD Community Services & Adult Social Care DASS	Oldham Council	Metropolitan Borough	100 – 105	235,623
Director Band	Rochdale MBC	Metropolitan Borough	100 – 128	220,001

* Other Allowances payable in addition

Sefton's Population – 275,000

Recent Recruitment Advertisements

			<u>Population Circa</u>
Barnsley Council	Executive Director Children's Services	£125K	245,199
	Executive Director Core Services	£125K	
Cheshire West & Chester	Director of Adult Social Care and Health	£98K	340,502
Newport Council	Strategic Director People	£104K - £113K	148,776
Nottingham City Council	Corporate Director for People	£148K	325,210
Reading Council	Director of Children's Services, Education and Early Help	£135K	339,408
St. Helen's Council	Strategic Director of Place Services	£119K	180,049
Lewisham	Executive Director Children & Young People	£150K	275,000

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11. Given the comparison and overall need to recruit, it is recommended that Council approve the salary levels over £100,000 and give authority where necessary to each EPC under the Council's approved Pay Policy.

SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL **JOB PROFILE**

POST - EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH

Salary £116,742

JOB PURPOSE

To have key accountability and responsibility for the delivery and strategic development within the area of Adult Social Care with ability to lead other areas within the organisation as required.

Support the Council, Cabinet and the Chief Executive in the development and achievement of the Council's vision and priority outcomes.

The role will support the Chief Executive creating and sustaining consistent culture and behaviours conducive with a high performing Council, lead collectively and collaboratively within and outside the Council as key drivers of change supporting the Council to innovatively, proactively and confidently adapt to the dynamic resource and policy agenda.

The role will have very high level accountability spanning organisational and system leadership, developing and sustaining effective partnerships, together with performance and stakeholder management and freedom to act in support of the Chief Executive.

The role will drive a high performance culture within the Council.

The role will lead on key thematic matters and be responsible for the delivery of key corporate and Borough projects

PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Provide Strategic Leadership across the Council with specific responsibility for ensuring that priority initiatives are delivered in accordance with the Sefton Vision Outcomes Framework and the Council's Core Purpose.
2. Lead a transformational approach to the delivery of Sefton services including creating new revenue streams, new models of service delivery, new demand management methods and new operating models to achieve the Sefton 2030 vision.

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3. Work with the Chief Executive, Cabinet, Council, Elected Members and colleagues to deliver our vision for Sefton.
4. Personal accountability for the delivery of a prioritised work programme with agreed thematic outcomes relating to the Sefton's Core Purpose.
5. Responsibility for Strategic resource decisions and leadership of transformational projects.
6. Develop and sustain strategic partnerships at the local regional and national level.
7. Role model the agreed leadership behaviours and support the development of a high performance, innovative and collaborative culture.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Provide strategic leadership to the whole Council and work in close partnership with the Chief Executive to deliver the Council's plans and develop its ambitions.
2. Ensure the Council's longer term vision, strategy and priorities are delivered.
3. Develop and embed a performance culture that delivers better outcomes for local people.
4. Work closely with all Elected Members, specifically with the Leader and Cabinet Members, and support them in undertaking their Strategic Leadership and Community Leadership roles by providing expert strategic advice, support and challenge.
5. Advocate for the needs of local people and develop strategies that enable local communities to become more resilient and self sufficient.
6. The postholder will:
 - Lead Council-wide partner Boards and working groups as required;
 - Act as the Emergency Duty Co-ordinator, on a rota basis, for the Council's Emergency Planning processes and to attend ongoing training as required;
 - Represent the Council at key Civic events as required including Remembrance Services;
 - Represent the Council at partner events as appropriate.

ROLE SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

Accountability to discharge the key duties of the statutory role of Director of Adult Services which includes strategic leadership to ensure vulnerable adults within the Borough are effectively protected from abuse and harm and to ensure the co-

ordination of inter-agency and partnership working and the protection of the interests of people whose rights are restricted under the Mental Health Act 1983.

Act in the capacity of the Authority's lead officer for Adult Social Care to ensure the strategic planning, design and delivery of these service areas and provision of the best possible services for the people of Sefton.

To be part of the Council's Executive Leadership Team and Senior Leadership Board recognising that the role incorporates ownership, commitment and leadership responsibilities for delivery of both Council and Community strategies, working in partnership with other agencies to achieve goals and embracing the concept of One Council.

To engage colleagues responsible for the provision of adult social care and key service areas to ensure that agreed outcomes are met consistently and in accordance with agreed policies and standards.

Responsible for providing strategic leadership to ensure vulnerable adults within the Borough are effectively protected from abuse and harm and to ensure the co-ordination of inter-agency working and ensuring the protection of the interests of people whose rights are restricted under the Mental Health Act.

Responsible for assessment and commissioning of Adult Social Care provision and ensuring all adults are safeguarded, working with the Director of Social Care and Health to contribute to the strategic planning and direction of the Service.

Lead and manage a range of complex operational and specialist service teams covering the functional areas encompassing; assessment of need, direct payment services, quality assurance and safeguarding together with the commissioning of appropriate Adult Care incorporating Day Care, Home Care, Residential, Respite and Carers Services activities.

Direct the effective delivery of performance, policy and planning for multi-agency Safeguarding services to respond to the needs of vulnerable adults ensuring the Council fulfils its statutory safeguarding responsibilities and ensuring decisions and actions are appropriate.

Achieve synergy by ensuring there is effective integration of related services within the Directorate and across the Council ensuring the contribution of private providers, and the voluntary and community sectors are effectively and appropriately harnessed. To ensure that services provided or procured are capable of meeting the Council's needs.

GENERAL:

The post may require specific safeguarding checks. Where these are required the person appointed will be subject to those checks.

The post may require access to the Public Service Network (PSN) requiring compliance with the HMG Baseline Personnel Security Standard.

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New appointments will be required to satisfactorily complete a six month probationary period.

The postholder will be expected to work flexibly and the exact nature of the duties described above is subject to periodic review and is liable to change. Out of hours working will be required as appropriate.

This job description is a representative document. Other reasonably similar duties may be allocated from time to time commensurate with the general character of the post and its grading.

All staff have a duty to take care of their own health & safety and that of others who may be affected by your actions at work. Staff must co-operate with employers and co-workers to help everyone meet their legal requirements.

The Authority has an approved equality policy in employment and copies are freely available to all employees. The post holder will be expected to comply, observe and promote the equality policies of the Council.

Since confidential information is involved with the duties of this post, the postholder will be required to exercise discretion at all times and to observe relevant codes of practice and legislation in relation to data protection and personal information.

Note: Where the post-holder is disabled, every effort will be made to support all necessary aids, adaptations or equipment to allow them to carry out all the duties of the job.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH – PERSON SPECIFICATION

Personal Attributes Required	Essential (E) or Desirable (D)	Method of Assessment
<u>Qualifications / knowledge</u>		
Educated to Post Graduate level	E	C/AF
Recognised Leadership Qualification or Relevant Experience	E	C/AF
Knowledge and understanding of the strategic, regulatory and political context within which local government operates with the ability to lead the service areas within the post.	E	AF/I
In depth Knowledge of formulating and implementing corporate policies and strategies.	E	AF/I
<u>Experience Relative to Role</u>		
Experience of operating at a high level within a complex organisation involving diverse stakeholders.	E	AF/I
Ability to successfully co-ordinate and deliver large multi partner projects.	E	AF/I
Substantial and proven ability to work successfully with Elected Members.	E	AF/I
Proven track record on delivering successful leadership and management outcomes within a large organisation setting.	E	AF/I
Significant understanding of strategic policy development and implementation within a large organisation setting applicable to Local Government and Sefton Council's vision.	E	AF/I
Excellent knowledge of the working of Local Government and other public, private and voluntary sector organisations.	E	AF/I
An ability to provide and empower innovative thinking which leads to tangible delivery of outcomes.	E	AF/I

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Assessment Methods Key:

AF – Application Form

C – Certificates

P - Presentation

I – Interview

Skill and Attitude and Value Based Criteria

- Sefton’s vision and promise sets out how we as a Council want to work with each other, and with our communities and our partners, to make Sefton a great place to be.
- Personal responsibility to support the delivery of the vision and consistently demonstrate the behaviours and values expressed in the Promise and Leadership requirements.
- Have the necessary political knowledge, skills and abilities needed to operate effectively in a political environment.
- Develop, lead, participate and collaborate in effective partnership across organisations and sectors.
- Focus on outcomes, break down barriers and facilitate One Council delivery.
- Thrive on ambiguity and demonstrate exceptional personal resilience.
- Create and sustain enabling and open relationships.
- Create the most effective environment for innovation, learning and performance.
- Lead change and empower the Council to effectively manage complexity, ambiguity and risk.

Prepared by:

<u>Name</u>	D. Johnson
<u>Designation</u>	Chief Executive
<u>Date</u>	September 2019

SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL **JOB PROFILE**

POST - EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE AND EDUCATION

Salary £116,742

JOB PURPOSE

To have key accountability and responsibility for the delivery and strategic development within the area of Children's Social Care with ability to lead other areas within the organisation as required.

Support the Council, Cabinet and the Chief Executive in the development and achievement of the Council's vision and priority outcomes.

The role will support the Chief Executive creating and sustaining consistent culture and behaviours conducive with a high performing Council, lead collectively and collaboratively within and outside the Council as key drivers of change supporting the Council to innovatively, proactively and confidently adapt to the dynamic resource and policy agenda.

The role will have very high level accountability spanning organisational and system leadership, developing and sustaining effective partnerships, together with performance and stakeholder management and freedom to act in support of the Chief Executive.

The role will drive a high performance culture within the Council.

The role will lead on key thematic matters and be responsible for the delivery of key corporate and Borough projects

PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Provide Strategic Leadership across the Council with specific responsibility for ensuring that priority initiatives are delivered in accordance with the Sefton Vision Outcomes Framework and the Council's Core Purpose.
2. Lead a transformational approach to the delivery of Sefton services including creating new revenue streams, new models of service delivery, new demand management methods and new operating models to achieve the Sefton 2030 vision.

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3. Work with the Chief Executive, Cabinet, Council, Elected Members and colleagues to deliver our vision for Sefton.
4. Personal accountability for the delivery of a prioritised work programme with agreed thematic outcomes relating to the Sefton's Core Purpose.
5. Responsibility for Strategic resource decisions and leadership of transformational projects.
6. Develop and sustain strategic partnerships at the local regional and national level.
7. Role model the agreed leadership behaviours and support the development of a high performance, innovative and collaborative culture.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Provide strategic leadership to the whole Council and work in close partnership with the Chief Executive to deliver the Council's plans and develop its ambitions.
2. Ensure the Council's longer term vision, strategy and priorities are delivered.
3. Develop and embed a performance culture that delivers better outcomes for local people.
4. Work closely with all Elected Members, specifically with the Leader and Cabinet Members, and support them in undertaking their Strategic Leadership and Community Leadership roles by providing expert strategic advice, support and challenge.
5. Advocate for the needs of local people and develop strategies that enable local communities to become more resilient and self sufficient.
6. The postholder will:
 - Lead Council-wide partner Boards and working groups as required;
 - Act as the Emergency Duty Co-ordinator, on a rota basis, for the Council's Emergency Planning processes and to attend ongoing training as required;
 - Represent the Council at key Civic events as required including Remembrance Services;
 - Represent the Council at partner events as appropriate.

ROLE SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

Accountability to discharge the key duties of the statutory role of Director of Children's Services (including Education) providing expert strategic advice on

statutory functions and professional practice in relation to vulnerable children requiring collaborative working across the Council and beyond.

Act in the capacity of the Authority's lead officer for Children's Social Care (including Education) to ensure the strategic planning, design and delivery of these service areas and provision of the best possible services for the people of Sefton.

To be part of the Council's Executive Leadership Team and Senior Leadership Board recognising that the role incorporates ownership, commitment and leadership responsibilities for delivery of both Council and Community strategies, working in partnership with other agencies to achieve goals and embracing the concept of One Council.

To engage colleagues responsible for the provision of children's social care and key service areas to ensure that agreed outcomes are met consistently and in accordance with agreed policies and standards.

Overall responsibility for the leadership and management of Children's Social Care providing universal and targeted services for children, young people and their families ensuring children are safeguarded and welfare is promoted. Act as required for any registration in connection with the post.

Responsibility for ensuring that the general principles stemming from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) are effectively implemented providing children and young people with involvement in the development and delivery of local services.

Manage, and develop the local Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and joint health and wellbeing strategy to promote the interests of children, young people and their families.

Oversee the provision of the Schools Functions ensuring Education Excellence for the Borough

Achieve synergy by ensuring there is effective integration of related services within the Directorate and across the Council ensuring the contribution of private providers, and the voluntary and community sectors are effectively and appropriately harnessed. To ensure that services provided or procured are capable of meeting the Council's needs.

GENERAL:

The post may require specific safeguarding checks. Where these are required the person appointed will be subject to those checks.

The post may require access to the Public Service Network (PSN) requiring compliance with the HMG Baseline Personnel Security Standard.

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New appointments will be required to satisfactorily complete a six month probationary period.

The postholder will be expected to work flexibly and the exact nature of the duties described above is subject to periodic review and is liable to change. Out of hours working will be required as appropriate.

This job description is a representative document. Other reasonably similar duties may be allocated from time to time commensurate with the general character of the post and its grading.

All staff have a duty to take care of their own health & safety and that of others who may be affected by your actions at work. Staff must co-operate with employers and co-workers to help everyone meet their legal requirements.

The Authority has an approved equality policy in employment and copies are freely available to all employees. The post holder will be expected to comply, observe and promote the equality policies of the Council.

Since confidential information is involved with the duties of this post, the postholder will be required to exercise discretion at all times and to observe relevant codes of practice and legislation in relation to data protection and personal information.

Note: Where the post-holder is disabled, every effort will be made to support all necessary aids, adaptations or equipment to allow them to carry out all the duties of the job.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE AND EDUCATION – PERSON SPECIFICATION

Personal Attributes Required	Essential (E) or Desirable (D)	Method of Assessment
<u>Qualifications / knowledge</u>		
Educated to Post Graduate level	E	C/AF
Recognised Leadership Qualification or Relevant Experience	E	C/AF
Knowledge and understanding of the strategic, regulatory and political context within which local government operates with the ability to lead the service areas within the post.	E	AF/I
In depth Knowledge of formulating and implementing corporate policies and strategies.	E	AF/I
<u>Experience Relative to Role</u>		
Experience of operating at a high level within a complex organisation involving diverse stakeholders.	E	AF/I
Ability to successfully co-ordinate and deliver large multi partner projects.	E	AF/I
Substantial and proven ability to work successfully with Elected Members.	E	AF/I
Proven track record on delivering successful leadership and management outcomes within a large organisation setting.	E	AF/I
Significant understanding of strategic policy development and implementation within a large organisation setting applicable to Local Government and Sefton Council's vision.	E	AF/I
Excellent knowledge of the working of Local Government and other public, private and voluntary sector organisations.	E	AF/I
An ability to provide and empower innovative thinking which leads to tangible delivery of outcomes.	E	AF/I

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Assessment Methods Key:

AF – Application Form

C – Certificates

P - Presentation

I – Interview

Skill and Attitude and Value Based Criteria

- Sefton’s vision and promise sets out how we as a Council want to work with each other, and with our communities and our partners, to make Sefton a great place to be.
- Personal responsibility to support the delivery of the vision and consistently demonstrate the behaviours and values expressed in the Promise and Leadership requirements.
- Have the necessary political knowledge, skills and abilities needed to operate effectively in a political environment.
- Develop, lead, participate and collaborate in effective partnership across organisations and sectors.
- Focus on outcomes, break down barriers and facilitate One Council delivery.
- Thrive on ambiguity and demonstrate exceptional personal resilience.
- Create and sustain enabling and open relationships.
- Create the most effective environment for innovation, learning and performance.
- Lead change and empower the Council to effectively manage complexity, ambiguity and risk.

Prepared by:

<u>Name</u>	D. Johnson
<u>Designation</u>	Chief Executive
<u>Date</u>	September 2019

SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL **JOB PROFILE**

POST - EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CORPORATE RESOURCES AND CUSTOMER SERVICES

Salary £116,742

JOB PURPOSE

To have key accountability and responsibility for the delivery and strategic development within the area of Finance & Customer Services (meaning Legal & Democratic Services, Strategic Support, ICT & Digital, Human Resources, Finance, and Facilities Management) with ability to lead other areas within the organisation as required.

Support the Council, Cabinet and the Chief Executive in the development and achievement of the Council's vision and priority outcomes.

The role will support the Chief Executive creating and sustaining consistent culture and behaviours conducive with a high performing Council, lead collectively and collaboratively within and outside the Council as key drivers of change supporting the Council to innovatively, proactively and confidently adapt to the dynamic resource and policy agenda.

The role will have very high level accountability spanning organisational and system leadership, developing and sustaining effective partnerships, together with performance and stakeholder management and freedom to act in support of the Chief Executive.

The role will drive a high performance culture within the Council.

The role will lead of key thematic matters and be responsible for the delivery of key corporate and Borough projects

PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Provide Strategic Leadership across the Council with specific responsibility for ensuring that priority initiatives are delivered in accordance with the Sefton Vision Outcomes Framework and the Council's Core Purpose.
2. Lead a transformational approach to the delivery of Sefton services including creating new revenue streams, new models of service delivery, new demand management methods and new operating models to achieve the Sefton 2030 vision.

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3. Work with the Chief Executive, Cabinet, Council, Elected Members and colleagues to deliver our vision for Sefton.
4. Personal accountability for the delivery of a prioritised work programme with agreed thematic outcomes relating to the Sefton's Core Purpose.
5. Responsibility for Strategic resource decisions and leadership of transformational projects.
6. Develop and sustain strategic partnerships at the local regional and national level.
7. Role model the agreed leadership behaviours and support the development of a high performance, innovative and collaborative culture.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Provide strategic leadership to the whole Council and work in close partnership with the Chief Executive to deliver the Council's plans and develop its ambitions.
2. Ensure the Council's longer term vision, strategy and priorities are delivered.
3. Develop and embed a performance culture that delivers better outcomes for local people.
4. Work closely with all Elected Members, specifically with the Leader and Cabinet Members, and support them in undertaking their Strategic Leadership and Community Leadership roles by providing expert strategic advice, support and challenge.
5. Advocate for the needs of local people and develop strategies that enable local communities to become more resilient and self sufficient.
6. The postholder will:
 - Lead Council-wide partner Boards and groups as required;
 - Act as the Emergency Duty Co-ordinator, on a rota basis, for the Council's Emergency Planning processes and to attend ongoing training as required;
 - Represent the Council at key Civic events as required including Remembrance Services;
 - Represent the Council at partner events as appropriate.

ROLE SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

Act in the capacity of the Authority's lead officer for Statutory 151 Officer, Legal and Democratic Services, Strategic support, ICT, Personnel, Finance and Facilities management to ensure the strategic planning, design and delivery of these service areas and provision of the best possible services for the people of Sefton.

To be part of the Council's Executive Leadership Team and Senior Leadership Board recognising that the role incorporates ownership, commitment and leadership responsibilities for delivery of both Council and Community strategies, working in partnership with other agencies to achieve goals and embracing the concept of One Council.

To engage colleagues responsible for the following key service areas to ensure that agreed outcomes are met consistently and in accordance with agreed policies and standards:

- Legal and Democratic Services- to ensure the Council complies with legislation and manages regulatory risk associated with its internal activities and services.
- Strategic support- oversee the Council's Policy, Performance and Communication Systems through the development and delivery of corporate transformation projects.
- ICT and Digital, Human Resources, Finance, Facilities management – strategic management of the co-ordination and delivery of high quality wide ranging and comprehensive Corporate Support Services.

Achieve synergy by ensuring there is effective integration of related services within the Directorate and across the Council ensuring the contribution of private providers, and the voluntary and community sectors are effectively and appropriately harnessed. To ensure that services provided or procured are capable of meeting the Council's needs.

GENERAL:

The post may require specific safeguarding checks. Where these are required the person appointed will be subject to those checks.

The post may require access to the Public Service Network (PSN) requiring compliance with the HMG Baseline Personnel Security Standard.

New appointments will be required to satisfactorily complete a six month probationary period.

The postholder will be expected to work flexibly and the exact nature of the duties described above is subject to periodic review and is liable to change. Out of hours working will be required as appropriate.

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This job description is a representative document. Other reasonably similar duties may be allocated from time to time commensurate with the general character of the post and its grading.

All staff have a duty to take care of their own health & safety and that of others who may be affected by your actions at work. Staff must co-operate with employers and co-workers to help everyone meet their legal requirements.

The Authority has an approved equality policy in employment and copies are freely available to all employees. The post holder will be expected to comply, observe and promote the equality policies of the Council.

Since confidential information is involved with the duties of this post, the postholder will be required to exercise discretion at all times and to observe relevant codes of practice and legislation in relation to data protection and personal information.

Note: Where the post-holder is disabled, every effort will be made to support all necessary aids, adaptations or equipment to allow them to carry out all the duties of the job.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CORPORATE RESOURCES AND CUSTOMER SERVICES – PERSON SPECIFICATION

Personal Attributes Required	Essential (E) or Desirable (D)	Method of Assessment
<u>Qualifications / knowledge</u>		
Educated to Post Graduate level	E	C/AF
Recognised Leadership Qualification or Relevant Experience	E	C/AF
Knowledge and understanding of the strategic, regulatory and political context within which local government operates with the ability to lead the service areas within the post.	E	AF/I
In depth Knowledge of formulating and implementing corporate policies and strategies.	E	AF/I
<u>Experience Relative to Role</u>		
Experience of operating at a high level within a complex organisation involving diverse stakeholders.	E	AF/I
Ability to successfully co-ordinate and deliver large multi partner projects.	E	AF/I
Substantial and proven ability to work successfully with Elected Members.	E	AF/I
Proven track record on delivering successful leadership and management outcomes within a large organisation setting.	E	AF/I
Significant understanding of strategic policy development and implementation within a large organisation setting applicable to Local Government and Sefton Council's vision.	E	AF/I
Excellent knowledge of the working of Local Government and other public, private and voluntary sector organisations.	E	AF/I
An ability to provide and empower innovative thinking which leads to tangible delivery of outcomes.	E	AF/I

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Assessment Methods Key:

- AF – Application Form
- C – Certificates
- P - Presentation
- I – Interview

Skill and Attitude and Value Based Criteria

- Sefton’s vision and promise sets out how we as a Council want to work with each other, and with our communities and our partners, to make Sefton a great place to be.
- Personal responsibility to support the delivery of the vision and consistently demonstrate the behaviours and values expressed in the Promise and Leadership requirements.
- Have the necessary political knowledge, skills and abilities needed to operate effectively in a political environment.
- Develop, lead, participate and collaborate in effective partnership across organisations and sectors.
- Focus on outcomes, break down barriers and facilitate One Council delivery.
- Thrive on ambiguity and demonstrate exceptional personal resilience.
- Create and sustain enabling and open relationships.
- Create the most effective environment for innovation, learning and performance.
- Lead change and empower the Council to effectively manage complexity, ambiguity and risk.

Prepared by: **Name** D. Johnson
 Designation Chief Executive
 Date September 2019

SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL **JOB PROFILE**

POST - EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PEOPLE

Salary £116,742

JOB PURPOSE

To have key accountability and responsibility for the delivery and strategic development within the area of People (meaning Communities, Locality Services and Public Health) with ability to lead other areas within the organisation as required.

Support the Council, Cabinet and the Chief Executive in the development and achievement of the Councils vision and priority outcomes.

The role will support the Chief Executive creating and sustaining consistent culture and behaviours conducive with a high performing Council, lead collectively and collaboratively within and outside the Council as key drivers of change supporting the Council to innovatively, proactively and confidently adapt to the dynamic resource and policy agenda.

The role will have very high level accountability spanning organisational and system leadership, developing and sustaining effective partnerships, together with performance and stakeholder management and freedom to act in support of the Chief Executive.

The role will drive a high performance culture within the Council.

The role will lead of key thematic matters and be responsible for the delivery of key corporate and Borough projects

PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Provide Strategic Leadership across the Council with specific responsibility for ensuring that priority initiatives are delivered in accordance with the Sefton Vision Outcomes Framework and the Council's Core Purpose.
2. Lead a transformational approach to the delivery of Sefton services including creating new revenue streams, new models of service delivery, new demand management methods and new operating models to achieve the Sefton 2030 vision.
3. Work with the Chief Executive, Cabinet, Council, Elected Members and colleagues to deliver our vision for Sefton.

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4. Personal accountability for the delivery of a prioritised work programme with agreed thematic outcomes relating to the Sefton's Core Purpose.
5. Responsibility for Strategic resource decisions and leadership of transformational projects.
6. Develop and sustain strategic partnerships at the local regional and national level.
7. Role model the agreed leadership behaviours and support the development of a high performance, innovative and collaborative culture.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Provide strategic leadership to the whole Council and work in close partnership with the Chief Executive to deliver the Council's plans and develop its ambitions.
2. Ensure the Council's longer term vision, strategy and priorities are delivered.
3. Develop and embed a performance culture that delivers better outcomes for local people.
4. Work closely with all Elected Members, specifically with the Leader and Cabinet Members, and support them in undertaking their Strategic Leadership and Community Leadership roles by providing expert strategic advice, support and challenge.
5. Advocate for the needs of local people and develop strategies that enable local communities to become more resilient and self sufficient.
6. The postholder will:
 - Lead Council-wide partner Boards and working groups as required;
 - Act as the Emergency Duty Co-ordinator, on a rota basis, for the Council's Emergency Planning processes and to attend ongoing training as required;
 - Represent the Council at key Civic events as required including Remembrance Services;
 - Represent the Council at partner events as appropriate.

ROLE SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

Act in the capacity of the Authority's lead officer for Locality Services, Health and Wellbeing and Communities to ensure the strategic planning, design and delivery of these service areas and provision of the best possible services for the people of Sefton.

To be part of the Council's Executive Leadership Team and Senior Leadership Board recognising that the role incorporates ownership, commitment and leadership responsibilities for delivery of both Council and Community strategies, working in partnership with other agencies to achieve goals and embracing the concept of One Council.

To engage colleagues responsible for the following key service areas to ensure that agreed outcomes are met consistently and in accordance with agreed policies and standards:

- Locality Services- strategic oversight of large scale universal direct services which enhance the Council's environmental offer and which are capable of generating additional income for the Council.
- Health and Wellbeing - managing the Statutory provisions associated with Public Health working with local partners to directly influence the commissioning of Health services to improve the health of Sefton residents.
- Communities - Developing resilience in Sefton's communities through prevention and early intervention strategies, support to neighbourhoods and managing community assets together with the development of initiatives which maximise voluntary sector and partnership input.

Achieve synergy by ensuring there is effective integration of related services within the Directorate and across the Council ensuring the contribution of private providers, and the voluntary and community sectors are effectively and appropriately harnessed. To ensure that services provided or procured are capable of meeting the Council's needs.

GENERAL:

The post may require specific safeguarding checks. Where these are required the person appointed will be subject to those checks.

The post may require access to the Public Service Network (PSN) requiring compliance with the HMG Baseline Personnel Security Standard.

New appointments will be required to satisfactorily complete a six month probationary period.

The postholder will be expected to work flexibly and the exact nature of the duties described above is subject to periodic review and is liable to change. Out of hours working will be required as appropriate.

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All staff have a duty to take care of their own health & safety and that of others who may be affected by your actions at work. Staff must co-operate with employers and

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co-workers to help everyone meet their legal requirements.

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Note: Where the post-holder is disabled, every effort will be made to support all necessary aids, adaptations or equipment to allow them to carry out all the duties of the job.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PEOPLE – PERSON SPECIFICATION

Personal Attributes Required	Essential (E) or Desirable (D)	Method of Assessment
<u>Qualifications / knowledge</u>		
Educated to Post Graduate level	E	C/AF
Recognised Leadership Qualification or Relevant Experience	E	C/AF
Knowledge and understanding of the strategic, regulatory and political context within which local government operates with the ability to lead the service areas within the post.	E	AF/I
In depth Knowledge of formulating and implementing corporate policies and strategies.	E	AF/I
<u>Experience Relative to Role</u>		
Experience of operating at a high level within a complex organisation involving diverse stakeholders.	E	AF/I
Ability to successfully co-ordinate and deliver large multi partner projects.	E	AF/I
Substantial and proven ability to work successfully with Elected Members.	E	AF/I
Proven track record on delivering successful leadership and management outcomes within a large organisation setting.	E	AF/I
Significant understanding of strategic policy development and implementation within a large organisation setting applicable to Local Government and Sefton Council's vision.	E	AF/I
Excellent knowledge of the working of Local Government and other public, private and voluntary sector organisations.	E	AF/I
An ability to provide and empower innovative thinking which leads to tangible delivery of outcomes.	E	AF/I

Assessment Methods Key:

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AF – Application Form

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Skill and Attitude and Value Based Criteria

- Sefton’s vision and promise sets out how we as a Council want to work with each other, and with our communities and our partners, to make Sefton a great place to be.
- Personal responsibility to support the delivery of the vision and consistently demonstrate the behaviours and values expressed in the Promise and Leadership requirements.
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- Create and sustain enabling and open relationships.
- Create the most effective environment for innovation, learning and performance.
- Lead change and empower the Council to effectively manage complexity, ambiguity and risk.

Prepared by:

Name

D. Johnson

Designation

Chief Executive

Date

September 2019

SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL **JOB PROFILE**

POST – EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PLACE

Salary £116,742

JOB PURPOSE

To have key accountability and responsibility for the delivery and strategic development within the area of Place (meaning Highways & Public Protection, Economic Growth & Housing, Planning, and Commercial Development) with ability to lead other areas within the organisation as required.

Support the Council, Cabinet and the Chief Executive in the development and achievement of the Councils vision and priority outcomes.

The role will support the Chief Executive creating and sustaining consistent culture and behaviours conducive with a high performing Council, lead collectively and collaboratively within and outside the Council as key drivers of change supporting the Council to innovatively, proactively and confidently adapt to the dynamic resource and policy agenda.

The role will have very high level accountability spanning organisational and system leadership, policy and place shaping, developing and sustaining effective partnerships, together with performance and stakeholder management and freedom to act in support of the Chief Executive.

The role will drive a high performance culture within the Council.

The role will lead of key thematic matters and be responsible for the delivery of key corporate and Borough projects

PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Provide Strategic Leadership across the Council with specific responsibility for ensuring that priority initiatives are delivered in accordance with the Sefton Vision Outcomes Framework and the Council's Core Purpose.
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4. Personal accountability for the delivery of a prioritised work programme with agreed thematic outcomes relating to the Sefton's Core Purpose.
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ROLE SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

Act in the capacity of the Authority's lead officer for Highways and Public Protection, Economic Growth and Housing, Planning, and Commercial Development to ensure

the strategic planning, design and delivery of these service areas and provision of the best possible services for the people of Sefton.

To be part of the Council's Executive Leadership Team and Senior Leadership Board recognising that the role incorporates ownership, commitment and leadership responsibilities for delivery of both Council and Community strategies, working in partnership with other agencies to achieve goals and embracing the concept of One Council.

To engage colleagues responsible for the following key service areas to ensure that agreed outcomes are met consistently and in accordance with agreed policies and standards:

- **Highways and Public Protection** Direction of the Highway Infrastructure Services, and all Public Protection enforcement, monitoring and inspection services and licensing matters.
- **Economic Growth and Housing** providing direction and leadership of the Economic growth, Housing and Economy and Skills Service.
- **Planning** - lead Statutory Planning and Building Control initiatives to ensure contribution to the achievement of sustainable development.
- **Commercial Development-** Management of the Strategic Investment Strategy requiring the application of innovative ideas and concepts and the implementation of major commercialisation projects

Achieve synergy by ensuring there is effective integration of related services within the Directorate and across the Council ensuring the contribution of private providers, and the voluntary and community sectors are effectively and appropriately harnessed. To ensure that services provided or procured are capable of meeting the Council's needs.

GENERAL:

The post may require specific safeguarding checks. Where these are required the person appointed will be subject to those checks.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PLACE –PERSON SPECIFICATION

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Assessment Methods Key:

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Skill and Attitude and Value Based Criteria

- Sefton’s vision and promise sets out how we as a Council want to work with each other, and with our communities and our partners, to make Sefton a great place to be.
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- Lead change and empower the Council to effectively manage complexity, ambiguity and risk.

Prepared by: **Name** D. Johnson
 Designation Chief Executive
 Date September 2019

Agenda Item 11

Report to:	Pay and Grading Committee Council	Date of Meeting:	15 th January 2020 23 rd January 2020
Subject:	Pay Policy		
Report of:	Head of Corporate Resources	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 recommend a Pay Policy for the Council as required by the Localism Act 2011

Recommendation(s):

Pay and Grading Committee:

The proposed Pay Policy at Annex A to this report is recommended to the full Council for approval with the amendment detailed below.

Council:

- (i) The proposed updates to the Pay Policy at Annex A to this report be approved.
- (ii) The amendment to the Pay Policy at para 54 stipulating (as now) that an individual who has left the Council in receipt of a severance, redundancy and/or pension payment may subsequently be re-employed or engaged under a contract for services, however stipulating as part of the business case that a period of time of at least 2 years (in most cases) from the final date of employment should have elapsed before re-employment is considered. All cases will, in any event, still require justification in the form of a robust business Case.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

To comply with the Localism Act 2011

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

No alternative, a Pay Policy for the Council as required by the Localism Act 2011

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

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(A) Revenue Costs N/A

(B) Capital Costs N/A

Implications of the Proposals:

<p>Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets): The Pay Policy has been amended and updated to reflect any changes that have occurred since the last report.</p>
<p>Legal Implications: The Council has the following duties under the following sections of the Localism Act 2011:-</p> <p>Section 38- The Council must prepare a Pay Policy Statement for each financial year which sets out its policies relating to the remuneration of its chief officers and its lowest-paid employees and the relationship between the remuneration of its chief officers and its employees.</p> <p>Section 39-The Council's Pay Policy Statement must be approved by resolution of the authority before it comes into force and prior to 31st March immediately preceding the financial year to which it relates.</p> <p>Section 40- With regard to its functions under sections 38 and 39 [above] the Council must have regard to any guidance issued or approved by the Secretary of State.</p>
<p>Equality Implications: There are no equality implications.</p>

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

A Pay Policy for the Council as required by the Localism Act 2011

Protect the most vulnerable: NA
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: NA
Commission, broker and provide core services: NA
Place – leadership and influencer: NA
Drivers of change and reform: NA
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: NA
Greater income for social investment: NA
Cleaner Greener NA

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Head of Corporate Resources (FD5901/19) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD4085/19) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

Implementation Date for the Decision -Immediately following the Council meeting.

Contact Officer:	Mark Dale
Telephone Number:	0151 934 3949
Email Address:	Mark.dale@sefton.gov.uk

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

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Introduction/Background

1. This report deals with a requirement in the Localism Act 2011 (the Act) which became statute in November 2011. The Act introduced a requirement for Local Authorities to agree and publish an Annual Pay Policy Statement effective from December 2011.
2. In February 2012 the DCLG issued statutory guidance “Openness and Accountability in Local Pay: Guidance under Section 40 of the Localism Act 2011” and required Local Authorities in England to take account of the supplementary guidance when preparing their Pay Policy Statements.
3. To comply with this requirement the Council’s revised Pay Policy statement is attached.
4. During the summer of 2016 the Government announced a proposal for a Regulation entitled “The Repayment of Public Sector Exit Payments Regulations”. The Government has power to do this under the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2016. The proposal concerned a situation where an employee within the public sector earning £80,000 or more receives an exit payment (such as redundancy and assisted payouts) and then returns to any part of the public sector within 12 months of leaving. The proposals within the legislation were that on returning to the public sector, the employee must repay some or all of the exit payment received, even if they return to a much lower salary role or to a different part of the public sector. The regulations were to be advanced to go through Parliamentary scrutiny and then to take effect. As at July 2018 (the latest update on the Gov.uk website) stipulates that the consultation on the proposals has been concluded but that the Government are continuing to consider the responses to this consultation.
5. In addition the Government has said it is to introduce The Public Sector Exit Payment Regulations 2016 which imposes a cap of £95,000 on exit payments made by public bodies. Payments to employees would not be able to exceed this amount. Since then the Regulations to bring this into effect have been awaited and in April 2019 the launch on the consultation of draft Regulations commenced. The consultation deadline for responses was 3rd July 2019 and Sefton Council’s response was shared with the Cabinet member prior to being fed through the appropriate channels. The outcome of the consultation is not yet known and final regulations are awaited.
6. Further, from 5 February to 3 May 2016, HM Treasury consulted on reforms to public sector exit payments and on 26 September 2016, the Government announced its intention to make further changes to public sector exit payments including: a minimum tariff of three weeks’ pay per year of service; a cap of up to 15 months’ salary on all redundancy payments; a maximum salary for the calculation of exit payments of £80,000; tapering amount of lump sum compensation an individual is entitled to receive as they get close to the normal pension age of the pension scheme to which they belong. The proposals are not yet law and final regulations are awaited.
7. When, or if, the above legislation is finalised, the Pay Policy will be updated accordingly and, as previously agreed at the Council meeting on 25th January

2018, the Pay and Grading Committee will be delegated to deal with any necessary amendment to bring the Authority into compliance with any statutory measure if the statutory review comes into place before Council has an opportunity to consider next year's Pay Policy.

Changes/Clarification in Policy

8. There is one area at paragraph 54 which has been subject to change (albeit this reflects a clarification).
9. The existing basic policy has not been changed in that any reemployment after a individual receives a redundancy/severance or pension payment will be permitted (however subject to a business case in respect of justification). This is because a blanket ban is not seen as desirable. However, it is recognised that such re-employment must not be the norm. An addition to the policy is that a time period has now been placed within the wording to give more certainty to employees who leave.
10. The effect of the change will be to create in most cases a presumption of 2 years when re-employment should not as the norm take place, however, in all cases, even after 2 years, a business case for justification for re-employment should take place. The policy also seeks to differentiate the circumstances of the lower paid who may lose employment and who may have fewer options in terms of future employment, this would make re-employment easier for these groups, although giving the stated position that re-employment is not the norm.
11. The need for greater clarity has been requested by some exiting employees given that the Council has been in the process of making savings and subsequent job reductions for a number of years.

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ANNEX A

PAY POLICY 2020 / 2021

(As required by the Local Government Transparency code 2015 and the Localism Act 2011)

<u>Contents</u>	<u>Para(s)</u>
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C Availability of Policy	6
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G Youth and Community workers	25
H National Joint Council (NJC) Employees	26-30
I Market Supplements Policy	31- 32
J Other pay	33-38
K Pay Protection	39
L Pay Relationships	40-44
M Other Terms and Conditions	45-48
N Public Health staff	49
O National Minimum wage and Living Wage	50-53
P Re-employment of staff in receipt of redundancy pay	54-55
Q Gender Pay Gap reporting	56-58

Note: Reference is made in this policy to various national and local terms and conditions agreements, and policies.

National Pay Agreements within Local Government

1. JNC Chief Executive Terms and Conditions of Service.
2. JNC Chief Officer Terms and Conditions of Service.
3. Local Government Pension Scheme:
4. NJC Terms and Conditions of Service (Green Book): [Green book](#)
5. Soulbury Terms and Conditions of Service: (Education & Young People)
6. Youth and Community Workers Terms and Conditions of Service (Pink Book): (Education & Young People)
7. Non-Standard Working Arrangements and Associated Payments: [Non-standard Working Arrangements](#)

SEFTON COUNCIL PAY POLICY

A. OPENING STATEMENT

1. The aim of this policy is to help maintain and improve the quality of service provision by ensuring that all employees are valued and receive proper reward for their work and contribution. It also serves to satisfy the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 relative to pay accountability.
2. It is recognised that both financial and non-financial rewards are necessary to attract, retain and motivate employees. As such there needs to be a close link between reward and the overall approach to people management, including workforce planning and development strategies. There needs to be a fair balance between changing organisational needs and the aspirations of individuals. Equally there needs to be recognition of the financial constraints of the current economic climate and the imperative to manage public monies responsibly.
3. This policy will assist in managing pay in a fair, equitable, responsible and transparent manner. The Council supports the principle of equality of opportunity in employment. In this regard every endeavour will be made to ensure that employees receive equal treatment, irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy or maternity.
4. All pay related decisions will be taken in compliance with the provisions of The Equality Act 2010, The Employment Rights Act 1996, The Employment Relations Act 1999, the Employment Act 2002, The Employment Act 2008, The Part-Time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000, The Fixed Term Employees' (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002, all as amended.

B. SCOPE OF POLICY

5. This policy covers all employees other than those in schools.

C. AVAILABILITY OF POLICY

6. This policy is available on the Sefton's Council website under [Pay Policy](#)

D. DECISION MAKING

7. The pay policy is the responsibility of the Pay & Grading Committee with any recommendations for change being subject to the approval of the Council.
8. The policy will be reviewed by the Committee at least once every municipal year and referred to the Council for consideration prior to the beginning of the subsequent municipal year on 1st April.

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9. The authority to make decisions in accordance with the policy and its application, is in accordance with the delegations described in the Council's constitution, which can be found in the documents library on Sefton's website.
10. In January 2013 Council agreed a mechanism specifically for;
 - The consideration of severance packages which amount to £100,000 or above, and
 - The consideration of new appointments which have a remuneration package of £100,000 or above.

It was agreed that:

- In relation to any severance packages in respect of the Chief Executive, Executive Directors and Heads of Service which amount to £100,000 or above, that Full Council are given an opportunity to vote to determine agreement, following a recommendation from the Pay and Grading Committee.
 - All other employees' severance packages of £100,000 or above are to be determined by the Pay and Grading Committee and may come before Full Council as part of the Budget process. The reason for utilising the Pay and Grading Committee is to allow operational effectiveness in seeking the approval of such payments, leaving Full Council to deal with severance packages for the Senior Officer positions.
 - In respect of the definition of a severance payment this is defined as:
 - (a) A redundancy payment
 - (b) Any capital cost to the pension fund
 - (c) Any other contractual payments which are due to the employee
 - (d) Any other payments which the Local Authority may seek to make
 - The Employment Procedure Committee will decide on the remuneration packages for Senior Officers in cases where the proposed remuneration is over £100,000. This will be debated at the point when the decision to fill the post is made. A recommendation will then be made to the Full Council who will have the opportunity to vote on the remuneration proposed. The remuneration must be agreed prior to an appointment offer being made.
11. It is proposed that the decision making processes for severance and remuneration detailed in the paragraphs above remain in force.

E. SENIOR OFFICERS PAY

12. Senior officers are defined as those currently earning £50,000 and above. The £50,000 threshold is applied as per the Local Government transparency code issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government [CLG].
13. Individual Senior Management pay is set out in data published on the Council's website in accordance with the Local Government transparency code. It provides details of;
 - the number of employees whose remuneration in that year was at least £50,000 - in brackets of £5,000
 - details of the job title of senior employees whose salary is at least £50,000, and
 - identification by name of any employees whose salaries are £150,000 or more.
 - the information is not solely based on salary but will include all remuneration i.e. overtime pay.

Senior Officer Pay data can be accessed through the Sefton Council website under: Personnel / Job Evaluation/ [Senior Salaries](#)

14. In addition, local authorities must provide a list of responsibilities (for example, the services and functions the postholder is responsible for and details of bonuses and 'benefits-in-kind', for all employees whose salary exceeds £50,000.
15. Senior officers (other than those paid under the Soulbury agreement) are paid in accordance with the HAY job evaluation method.
16. Chief Executive Salary – as at 1.4.2019 this comprises of 5 incremental points within a salary band ranging from £147,039 to £161,748.
17. As at 1.4.2019 Executive Directors are paid £116,742 and the Head of Health and Wellbeing / Director of Public health is paid on a personal grade of HAY 3 plus Market supplement providing for a total salary of £90,000. Heads of Service are paid at either HAY 2 (£97,871, HAY 3 £85,252 or HAY 4 £75,092 as spot grades, plus a Market Supplement if appropriate. Senior Management are paid relative to Hay grades 5 & 6. Hay 5 ranging from £ 61,962.00 to £68154 by 5 increments. Hay 6 ranges from £48,552 to £56,220 by 7 increments.
18. The terms and conditions for the post of Chief Executive are in accordance with the Joint National Council (JNC) Scheme for Chief Executives. In the case of HAY Grades 1 - 5 the terms and conditions are as per the JNC Scheme for Chief Officers. In the case of HAY Grade 6 the terms and conditions are in accordance with the National Joint Council (NJC) Scheme for Local Government services employees (known as the "Green Book").

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19. HAY grades are allocated to posts using the HAY job evaluation system. This system enables the factors of a job to be analysed and translated into a points score which, in turn, is related to the appropriate grade associated with the score.
20. Each year the HAY group are consulted as to what is an appropriate pay rise. The HAY Group advise based on predicted awards in the general market (Public and Private Sector), the amount of inflation, and the Retail Prices Index. This is then balanced against the National Joint Council Pay award and the ability of the Council to meet the pay bill. The pay rise to be applied is delegated to the Chief Executive and the Chief Personnel Officer.

F. EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS PAY [Soulbury Agreement]

21. The Soulbury Committee provides national collective bargaining machinery for advisory staff in Local Authorities. Nationally, it covers staff including: education improvement professionals, education psychologists, and young people's/community service managers. In addition to any annual pay increase, the Soulbury Committee also determines the national salary framework.
22. The Soulbury agreement provides separate sets of pay spines for Education Improvement Professionals (EIPs), Educational Psychologists, including Principals, Seniors, Assistants and Trainees as well as Community Service Managers. The current pay agreement covers pay spines payable from 1st September 2019 as detailed below.
23. The Soulbury salary scales consist of not more than four consecutive points. The salary is based on the duties and responsibilities of the post and the need to recruit and motivate staff. Minimum starting points are defined in the pay conditions and include an extended range to accommodate structured professional assessments.

Education Improvement Professionals (EIPs)

Spine Point	Salary from 1.9.2019
Ranges from spine point 1	£35,444
To spine point 50	£93,812

Educational Psychologists

Spine Point	Salary from 1.9.2019
Ranges from spine point 1	£37,175
To spine point 11	£55,040

Senior & Principal Educational Psychologists

Spine Point	Salary from 1.9.2019
Ranges from spine point 1	£46,607
To spine point 18	£68,954

Trainee Educational Psychologists

Spine Point	Salary from 1.9.2019
Ranges from spine point 1	£23,884
To spine point 6	£32,623

Assistant Educational Psychologists

Spine Point	Salary from 1.9.2019
Ranges from spine point 1	£29,359
To spine point 4	£32,950

Young Peoples Community Service Managers

Spine Point	Salary from 1.9.2019
Ranges from spine point 1	£36,761
To spine point 24	£64,707

24. The Soulbury agreement does not set its own specific conditions of service. Instead it provides that:

“The conditions of service of Soulbury officers shall be not less favourable than those prescribed for the local government services staff of the authority”

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G. Youth and Community Workers

25. The pay of Youth and Community Workers is determined from pay points prescribed by the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC). There are two ranges of pay points, one for Youth and Community Support Workers and one for Professional staff.

Youth and Community Support Workers

Spine Point	Salary from 1.9.2019
Ranges from spine point 3	£18,117
To spine point 17	£28,017

Professional staff

Spine Point	Salary from 1.9.2019
Ranges from spine point 13	£24,636
To spine point 32	£41,575

H. NATIONAL JOINT COUNCIL (NJC) EMPLOYEES

26. The largest proportion of employees are paid in accordance with the NJC (Green Book) terms and conditions of employment and in conjunction with a locally determined grading structure that is derived from the spinal column points (SCPs) provided by the NJC for Local Government Services pay scales.
27. Grades are allocated to posts using the Local Government Single Status Job Evaluation Scheme which forms part of the NJC (Green Book) terms and conditions of employment.
28. The grading structure and the arrangements for applying the job evaluation scheme are agreed with the local trade unions.
29. The NJC pay agreement for 2018 – 2020 introduced a new pay spine. Effective from 1.4.2019 the lowest spinal column point (point 1) is £9.00 per hour based on a 37 hour week which equates to £9.25 for Sefton's Councils 36 hour per week standard working. The highest spinal column point for none HAY grade officers (Point 43) is £23.63 which equates to £24.28 for Sefton's Councils 36 hour per week standard working.
30. The full National NJC pay spine as at 1.4.2019 is detailed below.

SCP	Annual Salary
1	£17,364
2	£17,711
3	£18,065
4	£18,426
5	£18,795
6	£19,171
7	£19,554
8	£19,945
9	£20,344
10	£20,751
11	£21,166
12	£21,589
13	£22,021
14	£22,462
15	£22,911
16	£23,369
17	£23,836
18	£24,313
19	£24,799
20	£25,295
21	£25,801
22	£26,317
23	£26,999
24	£27,905
25	£28,785
26	£29,636
27	£30,507
28	£31,371
29	£32,029
30	£32,878
31	£33,799
32	£34,788
33	£35,934
34	£36,876
35	£37,849
36	£38,813

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37	£39,782
38	£40,760
39	£41,675
40	£42,683
41	£43,662
42	£44,632
43	£45,591
43	£45,591

I. MARKET SUPPLEMENTS POLICY

31. The Council aims to recruit and retain the best possible employees with the skills, knowledge and experience needed to deliver excellent services and to meet its corporate objectives. There may be times when the grading of a post results in an inability to successfully recruit or retain to particular posts. In such cases it may be appropriate to pay a market supplement in addition to the salary to ensure that appointments can be secured. In these circumstances, the potential for the application of a Market Supplement Rate will need to be objectively justified. Such payments are lawful under the Equality Act 2010 where there is evidence to justify that market factors are the “material factor” for the post attracting a higher rate of pay than other posts with the same score. In order to establish equality of pay the Council needs factual evidence to prove that paying any Market Supplement Rate is “a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim”.
32. Any business cases made for Market Supplement payments will be subject to investigation and scrutiny by the Pay and Grading team followed by formal approval via the Head of Corporate Resources. Thereafter, the payments will be subject to annual review, and supplementary reviews following any pay award agreements or incremental advancement. In addition, the Joint Trade Union forum will be provided with details of any positions which have been approved for the Market Supplement Payments.

J. OTHER PAY

33. **Returning officer** The Council has to appoint a Returning Officer for elections. This is usually a senior officer of the Council who performs the role in addition to his/her normal duties. Appointment as a Returning Officer is deemed to be separate remunerable employment.
34. **Acting up payments** Employees are not eligible for honoraria payments under current Council policy. However, an employee who, following a fair selection arrangement, performs the full duties and responsibilities of a higher graded post on a temporary basis, will be paid in accordance with the higher graded post for the specified period and without any commitment to permanency in that post. This is known as “Acting Up”. It is an operationally practical arrangement applied throughout the workforce. It is an expedient measure that should maintain for as short a period as possible – normally less than 12 months.

35. **Advisory Staff in Local Authorities – [Soulbury Agreement]** In each of the separate Soulbury pay spines there is provision for employees to receive up to three further spine points under the Structure Professional Assessment (SPA) system. This element of the pay structure is based on performance assessment and forms part of the overall pay structure. Progression under the SPA system is subject to local assessment against nationally prescribed criteria.

36. **NJC Employees- Non-Standard Working Arrangements and Associated Payments**

In accordance with the NJC provisions the Council pays allowances in respect of employees who are required to work outside “normal” working hours.

37. In February 2011 Cabinet approved a package of “Local” terms and conditions following consultation with the trade unions. These conditions were implemented in April 2011, and have since been adopted as an ongoing contractual arrangement to assist with the budget provision.

38. **Tupe Pay obligations**

The Council has a number of staff on Personal salaries stemming from staff transferring into the organisation via TUPE regulations. In due course, as and when reviews are conducted the Council will look to transfer employees onto Sefton’s Grading structure and Sefton Terms and Conditions.

K. PAY PROTECTION

39. In certain circumstances where employees suffer a loss in basic pay as a result of the actions of the employer, 12 months’ pay protection is available.

L. PAY RELATIONSHIPS

40. The Local Government Transparency Code 2015 Part 2.2 para 51 and Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011 requires local authorities to produce information relative to pay dispersion i.e. the relationship between remuneration of Senior Officers and the remuneration of other staff. The information in this section illustrates the Councils pay dispersion.

41. The highest level of (*full time equivalent – FTE*) employee remuneration in the Council is associated with the post of Chief Executive which is £147,039.

42. The lowest level of (FTE) employee remuneration is £17,364 p.a.

43. The median level of actual basic pay for central staff is £19,171 p.a. The median level of actual pay including contractual allowances (e.g. overtime, shift pay etc) is £21,166 p.a.

The ratio listed compares favourably with the Upper 20:1 ratio as detailed in the Hutton Fair Pay Review Report. As at 1st November 2019 the (FTE) actual pay relationships are:

- Highest pay is 8.47 times greater than lowest pay.

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- Median basic pay is 1.10 times greater than lowest pay.
- Median pay including contractual allowances is 1.22 times greater than lowest pay.
- Highest pay is 7.67 times greater than median basic pay and 6.95 times greater than median pay including contractual allowances.

44. In order to achieve this calculation the pay relationships have been based on the lowest level of employee remuneration (using actual pay figures of centrally employed staff payable as at November 2019 and the highest level JNC pay applicable as at November 2019. The above pay relationship figures exclude a small amount of staff who TUPE transferred from Arvarto and under the TUPE regulations currently retain their Arvarto Terms and Conditions of service.

M. OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS

45. The normal working week is 36 hours (FTE). This is on the understanding that for those staff defined as senior officers, additional hours will be worked, as necessary, without financial or time off recompense.
46. The Council recognises the importance of the need to balance personal and working demands. Employees are required to be receptive to such needs both in their own case and relative to those for whom they may be responsible. It is considered that an empathetic management approach to controlled attendance will contribute to high performance and outcomes.
47. The Council's terms and conditions of employment generally provide for 27 days leave for employees with less than 5 years' service and 32 days after 5 years have been completed (35 days for HAY 5 and above). The Council also recognises long service by granting an additional 5 days leave (as a one off award) after 25 years' service has been completed and celebrates longer periods of service.
48. The Council also supports officers in the discharge of their duties by reimbursing expenditure, paying subsistence allowances, and operating a Corporate travel scheme for eligible employees offering reduced cost rail travel with deductions being made direct from payroll.

N. PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF

49. The transfer of the Public Health function and its associated employees in 2013 was on a statutory basis as per the Health and Social Care Act 2012. The pay scales applicable at the point of transfer were as per Public Health NHS pay scales and will remain static until such time as the positions become vacant. New appointments to posts within the Public Health function are made on either NJC or JNC HAY grades as appropriate to the role.

O. NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE / REAL LIVING WAGE

50. The National Minimum Wage (NMW) is the minimum pay per hour most workers under the age of 25 are entitled to by law.

The Government's National Living Wage (NLW) is the minimum pay per hour most workers aged 25 and over are entitled to by law.

The rate will depend on a worker's age. The current rates as at 1.4.2019 are:

- £8.21 per hour for ages 25 and over
- £7.70 per hour for ages 21 to 24
- £6.15 per hour for ages 18 to 20
- £4.35 per hour for under 18 years old

51. In addition to the above there is a *living wage* determined by the Real Living Wage Foundation. The rate is £9.30 per hour (outside of London) as at November 2019. This Real Living wage rate is based on the concept that a certain amount of money is needed to ensure that people are able to have a decent standard of living. The Real living wage is different from the National Minimum wage and the Governments National Living Wage. Adoption of the Minimum wage is a legal requirement however the adoption of the Real Living Wage is voluntary. To become a true Real Living Wage employer the rate would need to be applied not only to employees but also be extended to Third party contractors who are defined by the Living Wage Foundation as those who work regularly on Council premises, or premises necessary to the work being carried out, for 2 or more hours a day, in any day of the week, for 8 or more consecutive weeks of the year.
52. The Cabinet member has been provided with information relative to becoming a Real Living Wage employer but no determination has yet been made as to whether Sefton Council would wish to become a Real Living Wage employer.
53. Real living wage rates are updated annually in November and should be implemented within 6 months (i.e. by 1.5.2020). The National Joint Council (NJC) rates are updated in April each year. With effect from 1.4.2019 the Council is paying £9.2502 as its lowest rate per hour with an expected percentage increase due with effect from 1.4.2020 and therefore is in keeping with the Real living wage rate.

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P. RE-EMPLOYMENT OF STAFF WHO HAVE BEEN IN RECEIPT OF REDUNDANCY PAY AND/OR PENSION.

54. Subject to compliance with legislative/regulatory requirements:

- An individual may be in receipt of a pension (LGPS or otherwise) in addition to remuneration from their employment with the Council.
- An individual who has left the Council and been in receipt of a severance or redundancy payment and/or pension (LGPS or otherwise) may subsequently be re-employed or engaged under a contract for services. However, given the budgetary pressures currently facing the Council there should be (in most cases) a period of time of at least 2 years from the redundancy date before re-employment occurs and such cases must also satisfy robust justification and the business case in respect of justification must include specific details why the re-employment would be beneficial to the Council or service area. The Council recognises in consideration of the business case that any re-employment must only be after consideration of characteristics of the post and work area (including the ability to attract and retain employees) The business case should also consider the circumstances of the individual that left employment recognising that individuals in low pay jobs may be more readily re-employed.

55. All Local Government Pension Schemes (LGPS) Administrating Funds have the discretion to abate pension upon re-employment to local government. Merseyside Pension Fund discretion stipulates that anyone in receipt of a pension from the LGPS, re-employed after 25 September 2006, **will not** have their pension adjusted if they return to local government employment, **unless** they were granted Compensatory Added Years when they retired due to redundancy/ interest of efficiency. Merseyside Pension Fund have confirmed that this discretion still applies, however, the members awarded added years will now be of an age (youngest 65 years of age) where it would be highly unlikely that they would be re-employed.

Q. **GENDER PAY GAP REPORTING**

56. The Council is required by law to carry out Gender Pay Reporting under the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017 and to publish the results on both the Council website and a government website. In line with these requirements data is published annually. Ordinarily, the data published reflects the position on 5th April in the previous year.

57. The data published shows the difference between the average earnings of male and female employees but does not involve publishing individual employee data. The pay calculations are based on gross pay calculated before deductions at source. Pay data includes basic pay, paid leave, allowances, and shift pay but not overtime pay, expenses, redundancy or any other termination pay.

58. Gender Pay Reporting information is established each year by using our HR and payroll records and relates to centrally employed staff only and does not include Schools data as only employers with over 250 employees are covered by the legislation.

MD December 2019

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Agenda Item 12

Report to:	Cabinet Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services) Council	Date of Meeting:	9 January 2020 14 January 2020 23 January 2020
Subject:	Council Tax Reduction (CTR) Scheme 2020/21, Council Tax Base 2020/21 and Changes to Council Tax Discounts for Empty Homes		
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:

The purpose of this report is to provide details of the review of the local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2019/20 and to recommend that there is no change to the scheme for 2020/21 for working age claimants.

The report also asks that Cabinet recommend to Council changes to discretionary Council Tax Empty Homes discounts following the outcome of a public consultation, and an additional increase to the Council Tax long-term Empty Homes Premium following a consultation exercise that took place in 2018.

In addition, the report also asks Cabinet to recommend to Council an increase in the Exceptional Hardship Fund (EHF) budget from £150,000 to £170,000 from 2020/21 onwards.

Finally, the report provides an updated Council Tax Base for Sefton Council and each Parish area for 2020/21.

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Recommendations:

Cabinet:

- (1) Note the contents of the review of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2019/20.
- (2) Recommend to Council that there are no changes to the existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2020/21 for working age claimants.
- (3) Note the outcome of the recent consultation and equality impact assessment on the proposed changes to Council Tax Empty Homes discounts as set out in Annex B.
- (4) Recommend that Council approves changes to discretionary Council Tax Empty Homes discounts from 1st April 2020, to reduce the discount on uninhabitable properties from 50% to 0%, and to reduce the discount for the first month that a property is empty from 100% to 50%.
- (5) Recommend that Council approves a change to the long-term Empty Homes Premium from 1st April 2020, to increase the premium charged on properties that have been empty for 5 years or more from 100% to 200%.
- (6) Recommend that Council approves the relevant 2020/21 Council Tax Base for Sefton Council and each Parish Area as set out in Annex A.
- (7) Recommend that Council approves an increase in the Exceptional Hardship Fund budget from £150,000 to £170,000 from 2020/21 onwards.

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

- (1) That the report be noted.

Council:

- (1) Note the contents of the review of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2019/20.
- (2) Approve that there are no changes made to the existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2020/21 for working age claimants.
- (3) Note the outcome of the recent consultation and equality impact assessment on the proposed changes to Council Tax Empty Homes discounts as set out in Annex B.
- (4) Approve the changes to discretionary Council Tax Empty Homes discounts from 1st April 2020 to reduce the discount on uninhabitable properties from 50% to 0%, and to reduce the discount for the first month that a property is empty from 100% to 50%.
- (5) Approve a change to the long-term Empty Homes Premium from 1st April 2020, to increase the premium charged on properties that have been empty for 5 years or more from 100% to 200%.

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- (6) Approve the relevant 2020/21 Council Tax Base for Sefton Council and each Parish Area as set out in Annex A.
- (7) Council approve an increase in the Exceptional Hardship Fund budget from £150,000 to £170,000 from 2020/21 onwards.

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Reasons for the Recommendations:

Council Tax Reduction Scheme

Each financial year the Council must consider whether to revise or replace its local Council Tax Reduction Scheme. The Council must approve and adopt the 2020/21 Council Tax Reduction scheme by 11 March 2020, as set out in the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2017.

This report comments on the impact of various changes made to the scheme in recent years together with the impact of the Government's Welfare Reform changes. After consideration of the factors outlined later in the report it is proposed that the local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2020/21 remains unchanged for working age claimants.

Council Tax Empty Homes Discounts

Reducing the level of support offered by the current discretionary local empty homes discounts may encourage owners of empty homes to bring them into use more quickly. It would remove the current favourable treatment of empty homes, encourage better use of local housing stock, bring the Council's policy more into line with other local Councils in the Liverpool City Region who do not offer discretionary empty homes discounts and provide a much-needed increase in council tax income.

Long-term Empty Homes Premium

Increasing the long-term empty homes premium is intended to encourage owners to bring them back into use. Recent legislation allows the Council to increase the premium on properties that have been empty for longer than 5 years to 200% from 1st April 2020. Any additional income raised from the premium will help support the provisions of Council services.

Exceptional Hardship Fund (EHF)

The Council set the current budget of £150,000 in 2013/14. Since then the average Band D council tax charge in Sefton has increased by 25.6%. To keep pace with the increases in council tax the fund would have had to be increased by £38,500 in 2019/20. The fund has also been utilised to meet the cost of discretionary discounts awarded to care leavers since 2018/19. These discounts are costing approximately £19,000 in 2019/20. The suggested increase of £20,000 would offset the cost of the care leavers discounts in 2020/21 and restore some of the capacity of the EHF to alleviate the burden of council tax charges on CTRS claimants who are suffering exceptional hardship.

Council Tax Base

In accordance with Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, as amended, the Council is required to set a tax base for both Sefton Council and for each Parish Area for 2020/21 before 31st January 2020.

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

Council Tax Reduction Scheme

The Council last revised its local Council Tax Reduction Scheme in 2018/19 following a public consultation process. The changes introduced in April 2018 continue to address the Council's priorities to minimise the impact on vulnerable residents, by striking a balance between dealing with Council priorities whilst supporting those experiencing financial hardship. As a result, the changes made in 2018 continue to be fully monitored and evaluated. No alternative options for change have been considered for 2020/21.

Council Tax Empty Homes Discounts

The Council could choose not to make changes to discretionary Council Tax Empty Homes discounts. This approach would not provide an additional incentive for owners of empty homes to bring them back into use more quickly. A lower level of Council Tax income would be generated and a higher level of savings would need to be achieved in 2020/21.

Long-term Empty Homes Premium

The Council could choose not to increase the long-term empty homes premium; however, this would not provide any further incentive for owners of long-term empty homes to bring them back into use.

Exceptional Hardship Fund (EHF)

The Council could choose not to increase the EHF budget. However, this would restrict the Council's capacity to alleviate the burden of council tax payments on those CTRS claimants experiencing exceptional hardship in 2020/21 and in future years.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2020/21

There would be no additional revenue implications because of a decision to retain the current scheme. The cost of the current Council Tax Reduction Scheme has been reflected in the Council Tax base.

Proposed changes to discretionary Council Tax Empty Homes discounts and Long-term Empty Homes Premium

This report includes a number of proposals that would have an impact on the Council's tax base and forecast Council Tax income if they are approved. These include:

- Reducing the current level support offered by the discretionary Council Tax empty property discount from 100% to 50% (for up to 1 month).
- Removing the discretionary uninhabitable property discount.

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- Increasing the empty homes premium charged on properties that have been left empty for longer than 5 years from 100% to 200%.

Exceptional Hardship Fund (EHF)

Increasing the current EHF budget from £150,000 to £170,000 will cost £20,000 in 2020/21 and in future years. This budget is held in the General Fund so Sefton Council meets the full cost of discounts awarded under the scheme.

If Members agree the proposals within this report the financial implications will be outlined in the forthcoming budget reports for 2020/21.

Council Tax Base

Changes to the Council Tax base will have an impact on the level of Council Tax income transferred from the Collection Fund to the Council's General Fund in 2020/21. It will also impact on the amounts due to the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Fire and Rescue Service, and the Combined Authority.

The following table shows the impact of net changes in the year, forecast growth, and proposed changes to discretionary discounts and premiums, on the Council Tax base between 2019/20 and 2020/21, based on the 2019/20 Council Tax Band D charge:

Council Tax Income	Sefton Council £000	Police & Crime £000	Fire & Rescue £000	Combined Authority £000
Tax Base 2019/20	132,027	16,981	6,629	1,597
Net changes	22	3	1	0
Forecast Growth	478	61	24	6
Reducing the Empty Property Discount to 50%	342	44	17	4
Removing the Uninhabitable Property Discount	280	36	14	3
Increasing the Long-term Empty Homes Premium	178	23	9	2
Total	133,325	17,148	6,694	1,613

(B) Capital Costs

No capital costs applicable.

Implications of the Proposals:

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

The proposed changes to discretionary Council Tax empty homes discounts and the long-term empty homes premium is forecast to increase Council Tax income.

Legal Implications:

Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme

By Section 5 of Schedule 1A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended by the Local Government Finance Act 2012) for each financial year each billing authority must:

- a. Consider whether to revise its Council Tax Reduction Scheme or to replace it with another scheme
- b. Make any revision to its scheme, or any replacement scheme, no later than 11 March in the financial year preceding that for which the revision or replacement is to have effect.
- c. If any revision to a scheme, or any replacement scheme, has the effect of reducing or removing a reduction to which any class of person is entitled, the revision or replacement must include such transitional provision relating to that reduction or removal as the authority thinks fit.
- d. Before revising its scheme or making a replacement scheme, an authority must:
 - i. Consult any major precepting authority which has power to issue a precept to it.
 - ii. Publish a draft scheme in such manner as it thinks fit, and
 - iii. Consult other such persons as it considers are likely to have an interest in the operation of the scheme.

Council Tax Empty Homes Discounts

The Council has discretionary authority to set local discounts for empty homes under S.11A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by Section 11 of the Local Government Finance Act 2012.

Council Tax Empty Property Homes Premium

The statutory provisions which empower the Council to effect the proposed changes are set out in this report.

To comply with public law principles of good decision making, a consultation on the proposals has taken place and the outcomes are detailed in this report.

Equality Implications:

The equality Implications have been identified and mitigated.

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Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: The options proposed will help to maintain fairness and consistency. The changes that the Council introduced to the local Council Tax Reduction Scheme in 2018 are intended to work more effectively with Universal Credit, align the provision for children, disability, and caring responsibilities.
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: Provide support to those in financial hardship as well as supporting people into work.
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 (FD5890/19) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD4074/19) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2020/21

The precepting authorities (Merseyside Fire Service and Merseyside Police) and the combined Authority have been informed of the recommendation no change to the local scheme for 2020/21.

Council Tax Empty Homes Discounts

A public consultation ran for 7 weeks from 16th September 2019 to 1st November 2019. The consultation requested views on two proposals:

- (1) to reduce the discretionary discount on uninhabitable properties that is currently 50% for 12-months to 0% from 1st April 2020, and
- (2) to reduce the discount for the first month that a property is empty from 100% to 50% from 1st April 2020.

The Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside supports the Council's proposals to change Council Tax discounts from 1st April 2020.

Empty Homes Premium

A public consultation on the proposal to increase the Council Tax empty homes premium ran for 5 weeks from 29th October 2018 to 3rd December 2018. The consultation requested views on the proposal to increase the premium charge from 50% to 100% from 1st April 2019.

It also asked for views to further increase the premium charged on properties that have been empty for 5 years or more to 200% from 1st April 2020, and those empty for 10 years or more to 300% from 1st April 2021.

The Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside supported the Council's proposals to increase the Council Tax premium from 50% to 100% in-line with the new legislation from 1st April 2019. In addition, the Police and Crime Commissioner would also support the Council if it made the following changes to the premium: -

- 200% premium from 1st April 2020 on properties empty for 5 years or more; and
- 300% premium from 1st April 2021 on properties empty for 10 years or more.

Implementation Date for the Decision

Following the expiry of the "call-in" period for the Minutes of the Cabinet recommendation to Council and approval by Council on 23rd January 2020.

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Appendices:

Annex A: Council Tax Base Report 2020/21

Annex B: Summary of feedback from the consultation on changing Council Tax Empty Homes discounts and the associated equality impact assessment

Annex C: Summary of feedback from the consultation on increasing Council Tax long-term empty homes premium and the associated equality impact assessment.

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

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1. Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme

1.1 Introduction / Background

1.2 Local Council Tax Reduction replaced Council Tax Benefit (CTB) from 1st April 2013. The Council Tax Reduction Scheme is a discount awarded to households on a low income to help towards Council Tax payments. The amount awarded is based on a person's household and income. The local scheme rules only apply to working-age Council Tax payers. Pensioners are protected by legislation and must be provided with the level of Council Tax support specified by the Government.

1.3 The grant transferred to the Council, Police and Crime Commissioner and Fire Service in 2013/14, £24.2M; to fund the local scheme was £3M lower than had previously been provided to fund CTB in 2012/13. The Council therefore had to introduce changes to the national default Council Tax Support Scheme in order to ensure that the local scheme was cost neutral. As the Government had specified the level of support that had to be provided to pensioners, the saving requirement had to be met by reducing the level of support available to working age claimants and through changes to Council Tax empty property discounts.

1.4 The Council is required, by law, to review the Scheme each year irrespective of whether it is being amended.

1.5 The Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2020/21 must be agreed by Council by 11th March 2020.

2. Review of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2019/20

2.1 To satisfy the requirement to review the Scheme, the following areas have been evaluated:

- Claimant caseload
- Scheme expenditure
- Impact on most vulnerable claimants
- Welfare Reform changes
- Council Tax collection
- Attachment of Benefits
- Review of the Council's principles for the Scheme
- Council Tax Exceptional Hardship Fund.

2.2 Claimant Caseload

The table below shows the caseload data at 30th September 2019 compared to caseload data at the end of each year since the Council Tax Reduction Scheme was introduced in 2013/14:

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Year	Date	Pensioners	Working Age	Total	Change
2013/14	03.04.14	14,655	16,025	30,680	n/a
2014/15	01.04.15	13,925	15,349	29,274	-1,406
2015/16	31.03.16	13,206	14,886	28,092	-1,182
2016/17	31.03.17	12,541	14,524	27,065	-1,027
2017/18	31.03.18	11,970	14,005	25,975	-1,090
2018/19	30.09.18	11,650	13,951	25,601	-374
2018/19	31.03.19	11,404	14,160	25,564	-411
2019/20	30.09.19	11,183	14,190	25,373	-191

The working age caseload can be split further:

Year	Date	Employed	Other	Total	Change
2013/14	03.04.14	2,874	13,151	16,025	n/a
2014/15	01.04.15	2,748	12,601	15,349	-676
2015/16	31.03.16	2,504	12,382	14,886	-463
2016/17	31.03.17	2,193	12,331	14,524	-362
2017/18	31.03.18	1,900	12,105	14,005	-519
2018/19	30.09.18	1,763	12,188	13,951	-54
2018/19	31.03.19	1,597	12,563	14,160	+155
2019/20	30.09.19	1,286	12,904	14,190	+30

2.3 Pensioner Claimants: Since the implementation of the scheme in 2013/14 the number of Pensioner Claimants has declined in every year. The total change in pensioner claimant numbers between 2013/14 and 2018/19 was -3,251, which is a reduction of -22.2%. Pensioner claimant numbers have continued to fall in 2019/20.

2.4 Scheme Expenditure

The following table shows the Council Tax Reduction Scheme expenditure reported in the Revenue Outturn Return compared to the mid-year estimate for 2019/20:

Year	Source	Pensioners £000	Working Age £000	Total £000	Change £000
2013/14	RO Return	13,305	9,907	23,212	n/a
2014/15	RO Return	12,152	10,364	22,516	-696
2015/16	RO Return	11,895	9,760	21,655	-861
2016/17	RO Return	11,540	10,559	22,099	+444
2017/18	RO Return	11,378	10,948	22,326	+227
2018/19	RO Return	11,695	11,069	22,764	+438
2019/20	Estimate	11,862	11,776	23,638	+864

Notes:

1. 2013/14: The split of Pensioner and working age costs included an estimate

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based on ceased cases so may not provide an accurate basis for comparison.

2. 2016/17: The increase in the total cost included the impact of the reduction in claimant contribution, from 20% in 2015/16 to 16% in 2016/17 and the Council Tax increase of 3.69% in year.
3. 2019/20 Estimate: Pensioner & working age cost have been split based on the weekly average recorded on the monthly CTR304 reports up to 30 September 2019.

2.5 Council Tax Base Return Data

The following table provides a view of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme expenditure based on weekly payments recorded in early October as reported in the Council Tax Base Return:

Year	Source	Pensioners £000	Working Age £000	Total £000	Change £000
2013	CTB Return	12,602	10,214	22,816	n/a
2014	CTB Return	12,491	10,260	22,751	-65
2015	CTB Return	11,991	10,033	22,024	-727
2016	CTB Return	12,503	9,918	22,421	+397
2017	CTB Return	12,579	9,816	22,395	-26
2018	CTB Return	12,634	9,742	22,376	-19
2019	CTB Return	11,995	11,780	23,775	+1,399

2.6 Impact on the most vulnerable claimants

The Scheme implemented in 2018/19 continues to address the Council's priorities to minimise the impact on the most vulnerable, by seeking to strike a balance between dealing with Council priorities whilst supporting the financially vulnerable. The Council, having recognised the impact on communities, has introduced a range of mitigating actions, including:

- Provision of an Exceptional Hardship Fund (see Section 2.11)
- Allowing a Universal Credit notification, received from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), to be treated as a claim for local Council Tax Reduction, thus removing the need for those in receipt of Universal Credit to have to make a separate claim for support towards their Council Tax.
- Making provision in the local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for awards to be backdated for up to 6-months for working-age vulnerable claimants.
- Deciding that the Council's local Council Tax Reduction scheme for working-age families should not to replicate the rules that are in place in the national Housing Benefit scheme and the Council Tax Reduction Pensioner scheme whereby the removal of the family premium and the "2-child" rule restrict the level of award.

- Offering 12-month (rather than 10-month) instalment payments to Council Tax payers.
- Adopting a sensitive approach to enforcement action to consider the potential vulnerability of Council Tax Reduction claimants. Before cases are referred to Enforcement Agents a vetting stage has been introduced and cases are dealt with under a separate debt recovery process to minimise potential increases in debt.
- Facilitating a meeting between the Council's contracted Enforcement Agents and Citizens Advice Sefton to establish closer working arrangements to support people in debt. Citizens Advice Sefton now have direct lines of communication with the Enforcement Agents and can arrange for recovery action to be placed on hold whilst discussing and agreeing affordable payment arrangements.
- Implementing processes for Council staff to refer claimants to Citizens Advice Sefton for help and support with debt/budgeting advice, or making/maintaining their Universal Credit claim.
- Putting an escalation process in place for the debt advisor based at South Sefton foodbank to contact nominated Council Tax staff to request a hold on recovery action or discuss affordable payment arrangements.
- Participating in Sefton's Welfare Reform Anti-Poverty Partner's Group – staff from the Council's Council Tax and Benefit team, work with partner organisations and other Council services to support residents suffering financial vulnerability and to provide practical support such as signposting claimants for winter coats, school uniforms.

2.7 Welfare Reform Changes

The Government has implemented a series of welfare reform changes aimed at cutting the cost of welfare payments and providing more incentives to work. These changes have had an impact on many claimants and on the level of Council Tax Reduction awarded.

Because of the Government making alterations to the Housing Benefit scheme and other welfare reform changes, specifically relating to the introduction and gradual phasing in of Universal Credit, there was a need to make some technical changes to the Council's local Council Tax Reduction scheme, for non-pensioner claimants only, so that both schemes are more aligned. Council therefore approved changes to the local Council Tax Reduction scheme for 2018/19 to take effect from 1st April 2018.

The Council continues to monitor and evaluate the impact that the changes are having on claimants. The table below provides a summary of the changes implemented since 2018, as at 4th November 2019:

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Description of the change	Comment (as at 4th November 2019)
Fixed Income Period for six months	<p>There are 1,420 Council Tax Reduction claims with a Fixed Income Period applied.</p> <p>By setting a Fixed Income Period, Council Tax Reduction does not need to be recalculated each month when earnings fluctuate. The Council's Benefits service continue to review the claims to identify what the change is and decide if it requires reassessment.</p> <p>There are some administrative savings as Council Tax Reduction cases will not be recalculated each month where earnings fluctuate. Notification letters are not produced when there is no recalculation, revised Council Tax bills are not issued, and customers do not have a need to contact the Council to ask why their Council Tax bill has changed etc.</p>
Apply a minimum income floor for all Council Tax Reduction new claimants where they have been self-employed for more than 12 months.	<p>There are 25 Council Tax Reduction claims where the minimum income floor has been applied. All but 4 of the cases resulted in the customer not qualifying for Council Tax Reduction as a result. The low number affected is not surprising as the provision only applies to new claims.</p> <p>This change mirrors the rules used in Universal Credit</p>
Temporary absence rules for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction for those who leave the country for more than four weeks.	<p>No claims have been identified that are affected by this change.</p> <p>The four-week absence period can be extended by a further four-weeks if absence is linked to the death of a close relative or up to 26-weeks in certain other specified circumstances.</p>
Reform of Bereavement benefits: Bereavement support payment is disregarded for all other DWP benefits, including Housing Benefit	<p>Currently there are 5 claims where there is BSP (Bereavement Support Payment) recorded on the claim.</p>
Replicate Income / Capital disregard rules for payments received from We Love Manchester Emergency fund and London Emergencies fund	<p>No claims have been identified that are affected by this change.</p>

2.8 Council Tax Collection

The table below shows the amount of Council Tax billed and collected during 2018/19:

Recorded at 31st March 2019	Liability Raised £000	Received In Year £000	Collection Rate %
CTRS Cases - Working Age	3,953	2,781	70.3
CTRS Cases - Pensioner Age	1,715	1,736	101.2
Other Council Tax Payers	146,787	141,845	96.6
Total (in-year collection)	152,455	146,362	96.0

The in-year Council Tax collection rate reduced from 97.2 % in 2012/13 under the Council Tax Benefit system to 96.2% in 2013/14 when local Council Tax Reduction was introduced. Since then the overall collection rate has remained within a narrow range from 96.0% to 96.3%. The in-year collection rate for Sefton Council for 2018/19 was 96.0%, which is 0.7% higher than the average for Metropolitan Districts.

Council Tax Collection 2019/20

As at 31st October 2019, the in-year Council Tax collection figure was 64.11%. This is a drop of 0.14% on the equivalent comparison in 2018/19. However, throughout the year to date collection performance has varied from approximately +/- 0.1% compared to 2018/19.

There are several factors that continue to contribute to the difficulties in improving collection performance in year-on-year:

- The roll out of Universal Credit has resulted in delays in customers receiving their payments and this has had a knock-on effect regarding their ability to pay Council Tax.
- Delays in receiving Attachment of Benefits (AOB) monies – when a customer already subject to an AOB order moves onto Universal Credit their existing AOB order with the DWP is cancelled and must be resubmitted to the Universal Credit Team. This can lead to a period when no deductions are made.
- The number of customers advising the Council that they are seeking insolvency or debt advice has increased. In these instances, customers tend not to make required Council Tax payments.
- A greater awareness of vulnerability has meant that as soon as an issue is identified in most cases recovery action is placed on hold whilst the vulnerability aspect is assessed. It may also result in the Council entering into payment arrangements which take slightly longer to repay because of a genuine financial vulnerability being identified.

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2.9 Attachment of Benefits

Since the introduction of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme in April 2013 the number of working age claimants falling into arrears continues to grow. One recovery option open to the Council in respect of benefit claimants is to apply for an AOB via the courts. Under this option the Court can require a payment of up to £3.70 per week to be made by the DWP directly from the claimant's benefits to meet Council Tax arrears.

Payments by AOB do provide some certainty to both the Council and the debtor. For the Council, the payments do guarantee regular income from the debtor. For the debtor, there is the security of knowing that a debt is being paid by a deduction from their benefit.

However, AOB is not a perfect solution to the problem of growing debt for the following reasons: -

- An AOB cannot be applied without first having taken the debtor to court to obtain a Liability Order. Due to the need to follow the correct legislative timeline for obtaining a Liability Order, payment by AOB cannot commence until part way through the year. Typically for a bill issued in March the first payments would not be made by the DWP until August of the same year.
- Many debtors have arrears outstanding for multiple years Council Tax. An AOB can only be used to collect one debt at a time. In addition, current legislation does not allow the Council to take any other form of debt recovery (e.g. use of Enforcement Agents) whilst an AOB is in place. To mitigate this, people on AOB have been issued letters asking them to contact the Council for advice, to make alternate payment arrangements or seek financial advice from Citizens Advice Sefton. However, this initiative met with only a few people contacting the Council to make arrangements to pay.
- Collection of Council Tax debt by way of AOB is not the highest priority of debt administered by the DWP. Therefore, the level of recovery will be affected when people have multiple debts e.g. rent and energy debts are given a higher priority.
- Many new claimants for Council Tax Reduction have already accrued debts before an AOB can be considered.
- At the commencement of the scheme in 2013 the maximum deduction of £3.70 was lower than the minimum weekly Council Tax charge for all property bands. The minimum contribution of 20% towards the Council Tax was greater than the amount that could be collected within the year by AOB. This created a problem of debt being carried forward to the following year. Therefore, whilst debt payments are being collected regularly the amount of debt at the end of each year kept growing.
- To try and break the cycle of debt the Council Tax Reduction Scheme was amended with effect from 1st April 2016 to reduce the minimum contribution rate to 16%. This rate was calculated so that the AOB payment of £3.70 per week was more than would be due from Council Tax for many of the claimants. The table below provides a snapshot of the amount of debt being recovered under AOB and the amount of debt still waiting recovery by AOB:

	01.04.18	01.04.19	31.10.19
AOB in Payment	£916,181	£1,121,179	£1,268,727
No. of Cases	5,200	6,276	6,642
AOB Pending	£3,216,978	£3,987,625	£4,801,112
No. Of Cases	14,083	16,919	19,602

- A significant number of customers have arrears for more than one financial year. As only one AOB order may be deducted at a time there has been a significant increase in the number of pending cases. These cases are effectively stacked up until an earlier order is paid. No recovery action may be taken in the interim and the value of such cases is increasing year on year.

2.10 Review of Scheme Principles

The local Council Tax Reduction Scheme is based on five principles and the review is summarised below:

Principle	CTRS working for non-pensioner claimants?
The Council will continue to support work incentives	<p>Yes – The Council continues to operate a system which disregards certain amounts of money from customers earnings through employment (and self-employment) when calculating entitlement.</p> <p>This results in some additional support to those customers receiving Universal Credit who are in low paid work, following the removal of UC work allowances from April 2016</p>
The Council will continue to recognise the additional needs of our most vulnerable residents.	<p>Yes – The Council continues to make additional allowances and give additional support to those receiving certain DWP sickness benefits, disability benefits and benefits for Carers when calculating entitlement.</p> <p>Additionally, the Council continues to disregard certain disability benefits as income when calculating entitlement</p> <p>Procedures were reviewed for the collection of non-payment of Council Tax to ensure non-disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable households. Also budgeting support and advice is made available to all claimants.</p> <p>The Council Tax Exceptional Hardship Fund – is available to those in the greatest financial need with fair and transparent criteria for awards.</p>

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<p>The Council will continue to recognise the additional needs of families with children</p>	<p>Yes – Child Benefit and Child Maintenance payments are not considered as income when calculating entitlement to CTRS.</p> <p>Additional allowances are given when calculating entitlement for where there is a disabled child in the family.</p> <p>The CTRS also mirrors provisions in the Housing Benefit scheme by taking child care costs into account for low income working families</p> <p>The Council will continue to include the Family Premium when calculating the Council Tax Reduction. This was removed for all new Housing Benefit claims from May 2016. The Council has also chosen not to mirror the changes made to Housing Benefit which restrict the amount of support given to families with more than two children within its CTRS;</p>
<p>The Council supports households staying together to make better use of housing in Sefton and reduce homelessness.</p>	<p>Yes - The amount of Council Tax Reduction taken away from a customer when other adults live in the household (known as a non-dependant deduction), was reduced in 2013 and remains at those lower levels.</p>
<p>The Council will continue to have due regard to the Armed Forces Covenant</p>	<p>Yes – War Disablement and War Widows pensions in calculating CTRS, including any Armed Forces compensation in accordance with the covenant is disregarded. This also includes the service attributable element of the armed forces pension could also be disregarded as income when calculating entitlement.</p>

2.11 Council Tax Exceptional Hardship Fund (EHF)

A key feature of the local Council Tax Reduction scheme was the creation of an exceptional hardship fund with an annual budget of £150,000 to help mitigate hardship issues for vulnerable working age claimants. The fund is used to reduce Council Tax bills when an individual is judged to be facing severe financial hardship. The fund is administrated within an agreed policy approved by Cabinet Member for Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services.

For the purposes of administration, the decision to grant any reduction in liability is considered under any one of three categories, which includes “Exceptional Financial Hardship - for Council Tax payers who have qualified for support under the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme but who are still experiencing severe financial hardship”.

The Discretionary Reduction in liability Policy replaced the Council Tax Exceptional Hardship Scheme that has been in place since April 2013. That scheme was introduced by the Council to mitigate against potential issues that may have arisen because of the

abolition of Council Tax Benefit and the introduction of the local Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

The following breakdown shows EHF awards for period 1st April – 31st October 2019:

- 889 claimants received an award
- Total amount awarded = £100,687.51
- Average award £113.25
- Average length of award = 6 months
- 430 claimants receiving an award have received an award previously
- 254 claimants have received an award on 3 or more occasions
- 155 claimants have received an award on 5 or more occasions
- Highest number of awards = 12
- 446 claims have been refused
- 36 Claimants received an award for the first time having previously applied and been refused.

The Council set the current EHF budget of £150,000 in 2013/14. Over the past six years the average Band D council tax charge in Sefton has increased by 25.6%. To keep pace with the increases in council tax the fund would have had to be increased by £38,500 in 2019/20. The fund has also been utilised to meet the cost of discretionary discounts awarded to care leavers since 2018/19. In 2018/19 the Council awarded exceptional hardship discounts of £132,112 and care leavers discounts of £16,579, giving total of £148,690 charged against the budget. Care leavers discounts have increased to £19,200 in 2019/20 leaving only £130,800 to meet the cost of exceptional hardship discounts awarded in 2019/20. Steps have been taken to contain the amount of EHF discounts awarded in the year, however, the current EHF budget is likely to be overspent in 2020/21 if further rationing of discounts is not applied.

2.12 Summary of local Council Tax Reduction Scheme Review 2019/20

The total number of claimants eligible for support has reduced in each year since 2013/14. The number of claimants has continued to reduce in 2019/20. In the first 6 months of the year the total number of claimants had reduced by 191 (0.7%) to 25,363 (11,183 pensioner age and 14,190 working age).

The forecast cost of the scheme has increased by £0.864m (3.8%) in 2019/20 to £23.638m as at 30th September 2019. This is due to the impact of an average Council Tax increase of 5.1% and the offsetting impact of a reduction in claimant numbers.

Welfare Reform changes introduced since 1 April 2018 are expected to continue to increase the cost of providing Council Tax support in 2020/21. The financial impact will depend on the number of claimants affected.

Council Tax in year collection rates fell by 1.0% to 96.2% in 2013/14 after the replacement of Council Tax Benefit with the local Council Tax Reduction scheme. The collection rate has remained at a similar level since, with a collection rate of 96.0% being achieved in 2018/19. This was 0.7% higher than the average collection rate for all Metropolitan Districts.

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3. Council Tax Reduction Scheme - Consultation

The statutory provisions are silent on the consultation required when a council is not proposing to change its Council Tax reduction scheme.

Letters will be issued to the precepting authorities – Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner and Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service notifying them that no change is being proposed. The combined Authority will also be notified of no change.

4. Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme - Equality Impact Assessment

Department for Communities and Local Government issued a report in February 2014 reminding local authorities of their key duties when deciding on local Council Tax Reduction Schemes:

- Public Sector Equality Duty (The Equality Act 2010)
- Duty to mitigate the effects of child poverty (The Child Poverty Act 2010)
- The Armed Forces Covenant
- Duty to prevent Homelessness (The Housing Act 1996)

A detailed equality assessment was undertaken and published as part of the design and implementation of CTRS for 2013/14. This assessment had been reviewed in the context of the proposed options for 2016/17 and found there was no disproportionate impacts as the mitigating actions put in place for the 2013/14 scheme remained. The assessment can be found at Annex D: Council Report dated 24 January 2013.

5. Proposal to make Changes to Council Tax Empty Homes Discounts

5.1 Prior to 1 April 2013, the Government prescribed that certain classes of empty properties were exempt from paying Council Tax for a certain period set out in legislation. This included the following exemptions:

Description	Exemption
<u>Empty Property Exemption</u> For properties which are “unoccupied and substantially unfurnished”	100% for a maximum period of six months
<u>Uninhabitable Property Exemption</u> For vacant properties undergoing “major repair work” or “structural alteration”	100% for a maximum period of twelve months

5.2 In October 2011, the Government published proposals to abolish these mandatory exemptions and instead give billing authorities discretion to provide local Council Tax discounts on empty homes should they chose to do so. The proposals were intended to help local authorities keep the overall level of Council Tax down and to allow them to adjust the level of tax relief in respect of empty properties when local authorities judged that they do not merit special treatment.

5.3 Following a period of consultation the Government published its final proposals in May 2012. Legislation was then enacted in December 2012 that abolished the existing exemptions and allowed local authorities to set the level of Council Tax discounts that would apply to certain categories of empty homes from 1 April 2013.

5.4 For 'empty properties' the period of discount was limited to a maximum of six months. However, local authorities could choose to offer a discount for a shorter period or vary the level of discount offered within the period. For example, it would be possible to (a) offer no discount at all, (b) offer a discount of between 0% and 100% for six months or less, or (c) offer a larger initial discount for say one month, followed by a lower discount for up to 5 months or less.

5.5 For 'uninhabitable properties' the period of discount was fixed at 12 months (provided the property continued to meet the criteria). Local authorities could choose to (a) offer no discount, or (b) offer a discount of between 0% and 100% for 12 months.

5.6 On 24 January 2013, the Council approved the level of local empty homes discounts that would apply in Sefton from 1 April 2013 as follows:

Description	Discount
Empty Property Discount	100% for one month followed by 50% for the following five months
Uninhabitable Property Discount	50% for up to a maximum period of twelve months

5.7 On the 23rd January 2014, the Council decided to remove the 50% empty property discount that had applied from month two to month five. So, the revised discounts available from 1 April 2014 were as follows:

Description	Discount
Empty Property Discount	100% for a period of one month.
Uninhabitable Property Discount	50% for up to a maximum period of twelve months

5.8 The new local discretionary discounts offered a lower level of support compared to the previous mandatory exemptions. This resulted in an increase in Council Tax income in 2013/14, which was forecast at £1.010 million. A further increase of £0.780 million was forecast for 2014/15. This additional income was used to offset the impact of funding reductions that accompanied the abolition of Council Tax Benefit and its replacement with a local Council Tax Support Scheme in 2013/14, and to offset further grant cuts in 2014/15.

5.9 The level of both empty property and uninhabitable property discounts offered by Sefton Council has not changed since 2014/15. Other local authorities have reduced or removed their empty homes discounts in that time to increase Council Tax income in response to further significant cuts in Government grant funding.

5.10 The Council is required to formally approve any change to local Council Tax discounts.

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Empty Homes Discounts offered by other local authorities in the Liverpool City Region

5.11 There are five other billing authorities within the Liverpool City Region (LCR). Some continue to offer empty homes discounts, whilst others have removed the discounts altogether.

5.12 The table below provides a summary of empty homes discounts offered by all the billing authorities in the Liverpool City Region in 2018/19:

Local Authority	Empty Property Discount	Uninhabitable Property Discount
Halton	No discount	No discount
Knowsley	100% for up to one month	No discount
Liverpool	No discount	20% for up to 12-months
St Helens	100% for up to one month	25% for up to 12-months
Sefton	100% for up to one month	50% for up to 12-months
Wirral	No discount	No discount

The cost of providing empty property discounts

5.13 The table below shows the cost of providing the existing empty homes discounts since 2013/14:

Year	Empty Property Discount	Uninhabitable Property Discount	Total
	£ million	£ million	£ million
2013/14*	0.671	0.239	0.910
2014/15	0.664	0.330	0.994
2015/16	0.668	0.319	0.987
2016/17	0.698	0.348	1.046
2017/18	0.731	0.310	1.041
2018/19	0.775	0.260	1.035

* The cost shown for 2013/14 is for the first month only. The additional relief given in months 2 to 5 has been excluded for the purpose of this comparison.

5.14 The Council's tax base is calculated in Band D equivalents. Converting the level of discounts given in previous years into Band D equivalents can help to calculate the cost of the providing these discounts at the council tax charge in 2019/20. The average level of discounts given since 2013/14 expressed in band D equivalents along with their current value expressed as council tax foregone is shown in the table below:

Discount	2019/20 Band D Charge	Band D Equivalents	Council Tax Foregone
	£		£ million
Empty Property Discount	1,882.87	435	0.818
Uninhabitable Property Discount	1,882.87	178	0.336
Total	1,882.87	613	1.154

5.15 Council Tax income collected in the Sefton area is shared between the Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Fire and Rescue Service, the Combined Authority, and Parish Areas based on their annual precepts. The table below shows each authority's share of the average cost of the empty property discounts:

	Empty Property Discounts	Uninhabitable Property Discounts	Total
	£ million	£ million	£ million
Sefton	0.682	0.280	0.962
Parish Areas	0.006	0.002	0.008
Police & CC	0.088	0.036	0.124
Fire & Rescue	0.034	0.014	0.048
Combined Authority	0.008	0.004	0.012
Total	0.818	0.336	1.154

Proposal to reduce the level of support for Council Tax discounts on empty homes

5.16 It is proposed that from 1st April 2020 the Council agrees: -

- To reduce the level of discount on empty homes from 100% to 50% for up to one month, and
- To remove the uninhabitable property discount.

This proposal will increase Council Tax income, remove the current more favourable treatment of empty homes, encourage better use of local housing stock, and bring the Council's approach more into line with other local authorities in the Liverpool City Region.

Description	Proposed Discount for 2020/21
Empty Property Discount	50% for up to one month
Uninhabitable Property Discount	0%

Impact of the proposed changes

5.17 Reducing the discounts may encourage owners of empty dwellings to bring them into use more quickly. It will also remove the advantage currently provided to empty property owners bringing them more into line with occupiers of other domestic dwellings who must pay their Council Tax in full.

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5.18 Reducing the discounts will provide additional Council Tax income that can be used to support services provided for all local residents such as highways maintenance, parks, and refuse collection, as well as those services provided only to the most vulnerable members of the community such as children's and adult social care.

5.19 The discounts currently offered allow empty property owners with a period of relief from Council Tax charges. In some cases, this can encourage owners to undertake structural repairs to their properties to bring them back into use and in others it allows landlords with a short period between lets to undertake repairs. The discounts are also provided to owners moving between homes who leave their property empty perhaps because they are unable to sell or are undertaking minor renovations or redecoration prior to occupation.

5.20 Removing the 'Uninhabitable Property Discount' could discourage owners of these properties from making improvements to their properties.

5.21 Reducing the 'Empty Property discount' from 100% to 50% will affect landlords and owner occupiers who will be required to pay half the amount of council tax whilst they bring their properties into occupation.

5.22 Owners of empty homes will still be able to gain exemption from paying Council Tax if they qualify for one of the following remaining statutory exemptions:

Exemption	Description
Class B	a dwelling that has been unoccupied for up to 6 months and is owned by a charity.
Class D	an unoccupied dwelling left empty by a person who has gone to prison.
Class E	an unoccupied dwelling left empty by a person who is now resident in a hospital or nursing home.
Class F	an unoccupied dwelling forming part of the estate of a deceased person and the personal representative is waiting for grant of probate or letters of administration or less than 6 months have elapsed since such a grant was made.
Class G	a dwelling where the occupation is prohibited by law.
Class H	an unoccupied dwelling held for a minister of religion as a residence from which to perform his duties.
Class I	an unoccupied dwelling where a person has moved to receive personal care.
Class J	an unoccupied dwelling where a person has moved to provide personal care to another person.
Class K	a dwelling which has been left empty by students.
Class L	an unoccupied dwelling which has been repossessed by a mortgagee.
Class Q	an unoccupied dwelling which is the responsibility of a bankrupt's trustee.
Class R	an unoccupied caravan pitch or boat mooring.
Class T	an unoccupied dwelling that forms part of, or is situated within the curtilage of another dwelling and is difficult to let separately without a breach of planning control within the meaning of the Town and County Planning Act 1990(d).

5.23 Consultation

A public consultation in respect of proposed changes to Council Tax Empty Homes discounts with effect from 1st April 2020 has been conducted for a 7-week period from 16th September – 1st November 2019. Cabinet is recommended to consider the outcome of consultation before deciding to recommend to Council the proposed changes to Council Tax Empty Homes discounts from 1st April 2020.

Consultation findings and Equality Impact Assessment can be found at **Annex B**.

6. Proposal to Increase the Long-Term Empty Homes Premium to 200% on dwellings that have been left empty for 5 Years or more

6.1 Background

Since 1st April 2013, Councils have been able to charge a Council Tax premium on unfurnished properties that have been left empty for more than two-years as a means of incentivising owners of these properties to bring them back into use. The maximum allowable premium percentage was set at 50% between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2019.

The premium cannot be applied to homes that are empty due to the occupant living in armed forces accommodation for job-related purposes, or to annexes being used as part of a main property. Furthermore, the Council Tax system provides statutory exemptions for properties left empty for a specific purpose – for example, when a person goes into care. However, there is no statutory exemption from the premium for properties that are genuinely on the market for sale or letting. Councils also have powers to apply discretionary discounts in cases where homes are empty due to special circumstances – for example, financial hardship, fire or flooding.

The premium may be applied when a property has been empty for two years, irrespective of how long its current owner has owned it. Therefore, it is possible for an individual to buy a property which has already been empty for two years and be liable for the premium immediately. This scenario may occur if, for instance, the individual does not occupy the property immediately because they wish to extend or renovate the property. If the long term empty property is occupied for a period of 6 weeks or less it is regarded as not having been occupied for the purposes of the two-year period. Occupancy of a long-term empty property for more than 6 weeks “resets the clock” for this purpose.

6.2 Legislative Changes from 2019/20 onward

On 1 November 2018, the Government introduced legislation that would allow local authorities to increase the empty homes premium from 50% up to 300% over a three-year period with effect from 1st April 2019. The Rating (property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act 2018, allows local authorities to charge the following maximum amounts of Council Tax empty homes premium:

- 100% premium from 1st April 2019 on properties empty for 2 years or more;
- 200% premium from 1st April 2020 on properties empty for 5 years or more;
- 300% premium from 1st April 2021 on properties empty for 10 years or more.

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These are the maximum allowable empty homes premium charges.

The Government introduced this change because there is a serious shortage of decent, affordable housing, and tackling the issue of empty homes, while also seeking to ensure that we respect the rights of property-owners, is part of the solution. There are currently more than 200,000 properties standing empty in England. As well as being a blight on the local community and attracting squatters, vandalism and anti-social behaviour, long-term empty properties are a wasted resource when 1.16 million households are on social housing waiting lists. Increasing the premium will allow local authorities to strengthen the incentive for owners of empty homes to bring them back into use.

The Government recognises that a one-size-fits-all approach is inappropriate, given that different areas will have different housing needs and different numbers of long-term empty homes. That is why they are keeping the premium as a discretionary discount, allowing local authorities to decide whether it is appropriate for their areas, and what level of premium should be charged.

6.3 Long-term Empty Homes in Sefton

At 31 October 2019, there were 681 long-term empty properties paying the premium in Sefton.

The application of the premium has been successful in encouraging owners to bring long-term empty properties back into use. The number of accounts paying the premium has reduced by 105 (13%) from 786 in April 2013.

Following a public consultation, Sefton Council approved an increase in the premium from 50% to 100% with effect from 1st April 2019. The aim of this increase was to encourage more empty properties to be brought back into use.

As well as charging the empty homes premium, there are other Council initiatives to help bring empty homes back into use, this includes offering advice to owners through sending regular letters and the Council's property accreditation scheme that helps empty home owners find tenants for their property. The Council's Housing Standards Team will also work with owners to bring their properties back into use. However, in some cases enforcement action is required when the property is causing a statutory nuisance and the owner is uncooperative or untraceable.

6.4 Proposed Changes from 1 April 2020

It is proposed that the Council further increase the premium charge from 100% to 200% for properties empty for 5 years or more in-line with the maximum allowable under the new legislation from 1 April 2020.

The aim of this increase would be to further incentivise owners of long-term empty properties to bring them back into use. This will increase the stock of available housing in the borough, which would assist in achieving the aims of the local development plan. It will also increase the amount of Council Tax income raised from those that continue to leave their properties empty.

6.5 Revenue Implications

The proposed change in the long-term empty homes premium from 100% to 200%, on dwellings left empty for 5 years or more is forecast to increase the 2020/21 tax base by 113.2 Band D equivalents.

This would give the following increase in Council Tax income in 2020/21:

	2019/20 Band D Charge £	Additional Band D Equivalents	2020/21 Additional Income £000
Sefton Council	1,570.30	113.2	178,000
Police & Crime Commissioner	201.97	113.2	23,000
Fire & Rescue Authority	78.84	113.2	9,000
Combined Authority	19.00	113.2	2,000
Total	1,870.11	113.2	212,000

The forecast assumes a 25% reduction in the number of homes that have been empty from longer than 5 years is achieved in 2020/21. The actual number of properties brought back into use could be higher or lower than this and will be reflected in future tax base calculations.

Any additional income raised from the increased premium will be used to fund statutory services or to keep Council Tax levels down.

6.6 Further Potential increases in future years

It is proposed that a decision on future options to increase the premium charged on properties that have been empty for longer than 10 years or more to 300% from 1 April 2021, be deferred until a future year pending a review of the impact of the increase proposed in Section 6.4

6.7 Consultation

The Cabinet is recommended to consider the outcome of the consultation before deciding whether to recommend to Council the proposed further increase in the long-term empty homes premium from 1st April 2020.

Consultation findings and Equality Impact Assessment can be found at **Annex C**.

SETTING THE COUNCIL TAX BASE FOR 2020/21

1. Setting the Council Tax Base

1.1 The Council Tax Base is the link between the Council's budget and the level of Council Tax. The tax base will be used to calculate the Council Tax in Sefton, once the Council's budget has been agreed. The Council is required to calculate its own tax base as well as the tax base for each parish council within its boundary and have them approved by the 31 January 2020.

1.2 The calculation of the Council Tax Base takes into account many factors such as the rate of new building and the trends in people living on their own (Sole Occupier Discount).

1.3 The tax base calculation assumes a collection rate of 98.25% in 2020/21, which is unchanged from 2019/20. This reflects long-term collection rates.

2. Council Tax Base for Sefton Council in 2020/21

2.1 An analysis of the changes between the 2019/20 and the 2020/21 tax base before any of the proposed changes to discounts and premium is provided in the table below:

Tax Base for Sefton Council		Band D Equivalents		
		2019/20	2020/21	Change
H	<u>Chargeable Dwellings</u>			
	Dwellings on the Banding List	110,567.1	111,059.3	492.1
	Exempt Dwellings	-1,886.3	-2,134.1	-247.8
	Disabled Persons Reductions	-148.3	-149.6	-1.3
		108,532.5	108,775.6	243.1
Q	<u>Discounts</u>			
	Sole Occupier & Status Discounts	-9,937.1	-10,092.1	-161.1
	Empty Property Discounts	-194.0	-229.0	35.0
	Total	-10,125.0	-10,321.1	196.1
E	Empty Homes Premium (50%)	513.8	515.6	1.8
J	<u>Adjustments</u>			
	New Dwellings on the Banding List	199.8	309.7	109.9
	Banding Reductions	-221.0	-166.6	54.4
	Exemptions, Discounts, & Premium	-820.9	-654.8	166.1
		-842.1	-511.7	330.4
Z	Council Tax Support Scheme	-12,512.5	-12,567.8	-55.3
B	Collection Rate Adjustment	-1,497.4	-1,503.1	-5.7
	MOD Properties	8.0	8.0	1.0
	Council Tax Base (Option 1)	84,077.3	84,395.5	318.2

2.2 The main reason for the changes in the tax base under Option 1 are:

Dwellings on the Banding List: The number of properties on Banding List has increased by 519 (0.4%) in the year.

Exempt Dwellings: The number of dwellings subject to a specific exemption (Class A to W) have increased by 250 (10.9%). The largest increases were in the number 'dwellings left empty by deceased persons' (Class F), 'dwellings where occupation is prohibited by law' (Class G), and 'dwellings occupied only by a severely mentally ill person or persons' (Class U).

Discounts: The number of dwellings receiving a single occupancy discount has increased by 709 (1.5%).

Adjustments: A higher level of growth has been forecast in 2020/21. A lower level of changes to exemptions, discounts and premiums is forecast in 2020/21.

Council Tax Support Scheme (CTRS): The reductions in claimant numbers in 2019/20 has been lower than forecast. The value of CTRS discounts used in the 2020/21 tax base calculation reflects the value recorded on 31 October 2019. No further reductions have been assumed.

2.3 Proposed changes to empty homes discounts and premium.

Elsewhere in this report, Council are asked to consider three changes to (1) empty homes discounts, (2) uninhabitable property discounts, and (3) long-term empty homes premium. The forecast impact of these changes is shown in the table below along with the revised tax base if all three are approved.

Impact of Proposed Changes		Band D Equivalents		
		2019/20	2020/21	Change
(i)	<u>Empty Homes Discount</u> Reducing the discount from 100% for 1 month to 50% for 1 month.	n/a	217.6	217.6
(ii)	<u>Uninhabitable Discount</u> Removing the current 50% discount.	n/a	178.1	178.1
(iii)	<u>Empty Homes Premium</u> Increasing the premium from 100% to 200% on homes left empty for 5 years or more	n/a	113.2	113.2
Council Tax Base (Option 8)		84,077.3	84,904.4	827.1

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2.4 Alternative tax base options

The three proposed changes give rise to eight possible tax base options depending on which of the proposed changes (if any) are approved. The potential tax base options are summarised below:

	Change Approved?		
	(i) Empty Homes Discount	(ii) Uninhabitable Discount	(iii) Empty Homes Premium
Option 1	No	No	No
Option 2	Yes	No	No
Option 3	No	Yes	No
Option 4	No	No	Yes
Option 5	Yes	Yes	No
Option 6	Yes	No	Yes
Option 7	No	Yes	Yes
Option 8	Yes	Yes	Yes

The relevant tax base calculated under each of these options is shown below:

Option	Tax Base (Band D Equivalents)	Option	Tax Base (Band D Equivalents)
Option 1	84,395.5	Option 5	84,791.3
Option 2	84,613.1	Option 6	84,726.3
Option 3	84,573.6	Option 7	84,686.8
Option 4	84,508.6	Option 8	84,904.4

3. **Council Tax Base in Parish Areas for 2020/21**

3.1 There are also new tax base figures for each parish area in 2020/21. The following table provides details of the new tax base for each parish under all 8 options:

Parish	Tax Base (Band D Equivalents)				
	Aintree Village	Formby	Hightown	Ince Blundell	Little Altcar
Option 1	2,063.0	9,163.1	870.6	169.5	332.1
Option 2	2,067.7	9,180.5	872.1	169.7	332.6
Option 3	2,069.5	9,182.4	871.6	170.3	332.7
Option 4	2,066.1	9,169.0	870.6	169.5	332.1
Option 5	2,074.2	9,199.8	873.1	170.5	333.3
Option 6	2,070.8	9,186.4	872.1	169.7	332.6
Option 7	2,072.6	9,188.3	871.6	170.3	332.7
Option 8	2,077.3	9,205.7	873.1	170.5	333.3

	Tax Base (Band D Equivalents)				
Parish	Lydiate	Maghull	Melling	Sefton	Thornton
Option 1	2,063.5	6,721.8	1,007.7	234.6	785.5
Option 2	2,067.7	6,737.3	1,009.6	236.0	787.4
Option 3	2,067.8	6,736.1	1,009.5	235.8	786.9
Option 4	2,063.5	6,736.7	1,010.9	234.6	785.5
Option 5	2,072.0	6,751.6	1,011.4	237.2	788.8
Option 6	2,067.7	6,752.2	1,012.8	236.0	787.4
Option 7	2,067.8	6,751.0	1,012.8	235.8	786.9
Option 8	2,072.0	6,766.5	1,014.7	237.2	788.8

- 3.2 The tax base calculation for each of the parish areas is based on the same assumptions made in the calculation for Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council.

Changes to Council Tax Empty Homes Discounts Consultation Findings

1. Background

- 1.1 A public consultation ran for 7 weeks from 16th September 2019 to 1st November 2019.
- 1.2 The consultation requested views on two proposals: -
 - A proposal to reduce the discount on uninhabitable properties for a period of 12 months from 50% to 0% from 1st April 2020
 - A proposal to reduce the discount for the first month a property is empty from 100% to 50% from 1st April 2020.
- 1.3 The consultation was available online and by paper form to download where required. Direct mailing was used to contact all Council Tax payers currently in receipt of the discounts, landlords of properties in Sefton and the consultation was promoted internally through the service, including the Council's Empty Homes Team.
- 1.4 Letters about the consultation were also sent to various stakeholders including private and registered social landlords, owners of properties registered as uninhabitable and the major preceptors Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service, Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner, and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority.
- 1.5 Information about the survey was also available at Sefton Council libraries and One Stop Shops. The Council also promoted the consultation on its website, intranet, via a press release and its social media.
- 1.6 The aim of the survey was to ensure that the views of those Council Tax payers affected, other stakeholders and members of the public are considered before the decision is made to implement the proposed changes to discounts from 1st April 2020 and that any exceptions to the premium be considered.

2. Consultation Options

- 2.1 The options consulted on were as follows,

Survey Question 2 How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposal to reduce the Council Tax discount on uninhabitable properties for a period of up to 12 months from 50% to 0% from 1st April 2020?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Survey Question 3 How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposal to reduce the Council Tax discount for the first month a property is empty from 100% to 50% from 1st April 2020?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Survey Question 4 Do you have any additional comments relating to these proposals?

3. Analysis of survey results

- 3.1 In total, there were 216 responses to the on-line consultation and 2 were received via e-mail. The overall response is relatively substantial for proposals that only affected 613 properties at the time of the survey.
- 3.2 Survey Question 1 asked respondents to identify the capacity in which they were responding to the survey. A summary of the responses is listed in the table below:

A member of the public	182
A landlord of a property in Sefton that is empty	16
A landlord of a property in Sefton that isn't empty	26
The owner of a property in Sefton that has been declared uninhabitable	18
An elected Member	0
A local business owner	8
No response provided	0

3.3 Responses to questions

Survey Question 2 How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposal to reduce the Council Tax discount on uninhabitable properties for a period of up to 12 months from 50% to 0% from 1st April 2020?

Option	Responses	Percent
Strongly agree	92	42.20%
Agree	29	13.30%
Neither agree nor disagree	5	2.29%
Disagree	20	9.18%
Strongly disagree	72	33.03%
No response provided	0	0.00%

A summary of responses to this question is as follows:

Strongly Agree/ Agree	Neither agree / disagree	Disagree / Strongly disagree
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121	5	92
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Survey Question 3 How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposal to reduce the Council Tax discount for the first month a property is empty from 100% to 50% from 1st April 2020?

Option	Responses	Percent
Strongly agree	66	30.28%
Agree	30	13.76%
Neither agree nor disagree	12	5.50%
Disagree	18	8.26%
Strongly disagree	92	42.20%
No response provided	0	0.00%

A summary of responses to this question is as follows:

Strongly Agree/ Agree	Neither agree / disagree	Disagree / Strongly disagree
96	12	110

3.4 Respondents Additional Comments

Survey Question 4 asked respondents ‘Do you have any additional comments relating to these proposals. 117 respondents to the survey made additional comments.

3.4.1 In response to **Survey Question 2** on the proposal to reduce the discount on uninhabitable properties for up to 12 months from 50% to 0%, responses were analysed for recurring themes that are summarised in the following tables.

Response	Affordability for bills or renovation	Discounts no longer affordable for Council	Empty homes do not receive Council Services	Other Comments
Strongly Agree	5	2	0	13
Agree	1	0	0	6
Neither Agree /Disagree	1	0	0	1
Disagree	5	0	1	7
Strongly Disagree	24	0	9	14

Response	Will encourage sale or rent	Will encourage renovation	Will discourage renovation
Strongly Agree	7	14	7
Agree	1	0	1
Neither Agree /Disagree	1	1	0
Disagree	0	0	1
Strongly Disagree	0	0	6

3.4.2 In response to **Survey Question 3** on the proposal to reduce the discount on empty properties empty for up to one month from 100% to 50%, responses were analysed for recurring themes that are summarised in the following tables.

Response	Affordability for bills or renovation	Discounts no longer affordable for Council	Empty homes do not receive Council Services	Other Comments
Strongly Agree	3	2	0	5
Agree	0	0	0	1
Neither Agree /Disagree	2	0	0	3
Disagree	4	0	0	3
Strongly Disagree	27	0	10	29

Response	Will encourage sale or rent	Will encourage renovation	Will discourage renovation
Strongly Agree	16	10	5
Agree	2	3	2
Neither Agree /Disagree	2	1	1
Disagree	0	0	6
Strongly Disagree	0	0	6

3.4.3 Full responses from those who Strongly Agreed or Agreed with the proposals are shown below.

- I think this will encourage people to sell long term homes.
- Other councils such as in the Blackburn area have a 100% discount for the first 3 months, after this time is it should go to 50% for the rest of the year. If a property becomes empty it is impossible to do repair work, assess new tenants and get it rented to a new a new tenant in one month, Liverpool council are ripping off good intention Landlords. If a property is empty for more than a year then the Landlord may have no intention of renting and is ripping off the system and Liverpool council, possibly waiting for property prices to increase before selling, so after a year there should be no discount and full rates should be paid. The present system is just not fair on good Landlords,
- discount at 0% for the first month would possibly encourage remedial work to be carried out asap
- As an accredited landlord of two flats that I rent out very quickly due to my high standards it is very difficult to let within one month as I only advertise and allow viewings once tenants have moved out and often there is maintenance and refurbishment required. Therefore I feel one month at a discount of 100% is fair in allowing landlords to find new tenants as quickly as possible

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- As a landlord, the one month grace period ensures you redecorate and refurbish for the next tenant, thus improving quality.
- If the council tax discount is not available landlords will be forced to rent out immediately and at to the decline of the housing stock.
- Landlords who allow property to fall into disrepair is a blight on local communities and they should not receive any benefits for allowing good property to fall into disrepair
- As someone who lives next door to an uninhabited property I feel very strongly about this. The house and garden is an eye-sore which affects my house. But it could be a lovely family home for someone who really needs it and be proud to take care of it. The owners just don't care and there's no incentive for them to sell or repair especially with current council tax rules.
- This is a fantastic was for building owners to get there buildings back up and rented or sold on, I do believe if a retail unit is empty the rates should be hired to ensure the owners get the units rented out again ASAP. If a new store is to open in a unit above 10k annual rates they should get 3months free rates to help encourage company to the town.
- Reducing the empty property discount for the first month will cause distress and hardship for relatives of people who have just died. My father lived alone and died unexpectedly. It was hard enough dealing with the funeral arrangements without having had to worry about finding the money for Council Tax. The initial grace period was welcome and gave breathing space to sort out financial arrangements.
- We have had the benefit of these discounts but it was while we planned a refurbishment which is different than a property that is just abandoned. If someone can prove they are planning a refurb, or in the process of moving in, I think a discount is reasonable. Otherwise no discounts should be given. Properties should not be allowed to deteriorate or remain empty unless there are extreme circumstances. It can impact the quality of life of the neighbours & bring an area down.
- What about business premises? Land left i.e. Crown Buildings
- In response to Q3. I think you should reduce the empty property discount to 0%. It seems contradictory to charge a premium on long-term empty properties and at the same time offer a discount on short-term empty properties. There is a housing shortage in this country so it makes no sense to offer a discount that encourage owners to leave their properties empty, even for 1 month. The owners will still expect their bins to be emptied and the roads to be maintained so they should make a full contribution to the cost of local services. In my experience empty homes are a magnet for antisocial and criminal behaviour, all home owners should pay the full council tax to encourage them to occupy as soon as possible.
- Empty properties are not well maintained and bring the area down. They should be sold or rented - there is plenty of demand in most areas!

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- Stop people saying they are not living while renovating. Try 35 pr98na. Noisy get, working gone midnight!
- Q2) Reduction in Council Tax discount should surely remain in place until the property is either disposed of or until it becomes habitable and occupied.
- Q3 My definitive response to this would depend on what happens after the first month that the property is empty. Reductions in CT discount should be progressive until the property becomes occupied.
- All measures should be considered to get empty properties back into use to help with the shortage of houses.
- Past generosity cannot be sustained in the face of Central Government policy.
- Properties may be empty for family reasons...such as Caring for a family member who has a terminal illness or change of work circumstances or personal illness can mean that people cannot take up or resume residence. The home is temporarily but indefinitely empty. To add a further financial burden would be unfair and unkind. Better ways to raise revenue which is presumably what this about. Uninhabitable properties need a different approach depending on the reason for the decay. It has to be case by case policy and not a blanket rule.
- I recognise as a landlord this increase may affect me in the future should my property become empty BUT I believe that this change is needed to support our communities living near empty uncared-for properties.
- If you can afford to be lucky to have 2 or more properties you should be able to afford the Council Tax in every property.
- I think people who have left property to go to rack and ruin and have not made any efforts to renovate etc should have to pay full council tax. However I was a one property landlord. My tenant (a Sefton council early help worker) wrecked the place and left with 9 months still on the tenancy. Cost me thousands to fix. I had the property on the market within 6 weeks but still had to pay the council tax even when the sale was going through. I think it's unfair if a property is on the market and discount should be based on circumstances especially when a landlord has been left seriously out of pocket.
- Need to penalise owners financially to incentivise them to progress actions to use house for purpose intended
- I think this is a great idea that will encourage landlords to actually take care of their properties & keep houses that could be used to home people, to a better standard
- Council tax reduction should not be applied to any empty property full stop. Homes that are looking for a tenant should also be subject this to prevent landlords demanding higher rents. All homes should increase 100% year on year if left empty homes are for living not an asset to accumulation of wealth.
- I feel the current fees do not allow people to up these homes to live in due to the high costs

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- There will be cases where paying the whole Council tax will not be appropriate so there needs to be some flexibility
- Near me there are 2 empty houses, one is an eyesore & is inhabitable & the other has been empty for about 20 years & could easily be lived in again. The owners should be encouraged to act & get them sold so other families could live in this attractive area. Cutting council tax subsidies might influence the owners to offload their properties.
- People who own empty properties in state of disrepair should be forced to maintain them or give them up too many ruining neighbourhoods owned by individuals at other side of country who can't be bothered with or care about them
- Start charging rates on Charity shops - they're the ones that can afford it !!!
- I Think people who own a house should pay council tax. People should not pay council tax only in exceptional circumstance.
- If a landlord is doing major redevelopment work to the property (in order to significantly improve it for prospective tenants), then the property could be inspected by council officials (as has been done in the past) and a date given when the property MUST be brought back into use and the discount will stop (if longer than 1 month). Without this as an option landlords could be forced to house tenants in unfit properties.
- I strongly agree that criteria would need to be met and landlords leaving empty properties for lengthy periods should pay the full council tax.
- 1 month is long enough to fill a house once previous tenants leave.
- There are far more empty homes than are suggested in your discount figures. Some in PR9 have been empty for at least five years, you should be bringing these back into use before building new
- residents should be given at least one month's grace in respect of a deceased member of the family , resulting in an empty property
- There are so many reasons that a property may be empty that I think a month of 100% discount is reasonable. In general I am in favour of helping owners to get their properties back in use but would like to see some discretion being applied. e.g. if the owner is unwilling to upgrade or is mothballing a property until property prices rise they should not have a discount, but if there has been some serious damage to a property it may well take a year to get it habitable again. Would this loss of discount apply to a property that has been flooded out, for instance?
- As a landlord with 200 units in Southport, I'm appalled by the proposal that properties empty for up to a month will have to pay CTAX. The month is important to us between tenancies in order to do maintenance and upgrading to our properties. This proposal could well lead to a rush to fill and consequent lowering of housing standards. It gives us no time to properly check on applicants and is therefore a further back door tax on landlords. We already have had substantial national tax rises brought in by George Osborne,

followed by additional licensing locally. Most private landlords I know are desperate to get out, this proposal could be the final straw. There would be consequences for Southport in that there is already a shortage of decent accommodation especially at entry level, we currently operate at 94 per cent occupancy. We need capacity in order to attract young people to live and work in the town. I fully expect widespread non reporting of vacancies with large increase in Council staff to police and enforce the new regulation.

- 1 month @ 100% is fair and not period of grace would be unreasonable. Given that the property owner has fairly paid CT previously its fair to give this period of grace, one of the ever dwindling reliefs that hard working tax payers receive.
- For empty houses consider keeping the 100% discount for 1st month if it is empty because it has recently been sold to be inhabited by the owner. (Possibly empty if work needs to be carried out or awaiting refurbishment)
- Any property left empty for more than 12 months should be compulsory purchased and sold for refurbishment.
- Paying 100% council tax myself, I find it difficult to stomach that people are being allowed to 'hold on to' property, receive a discount and not do anything to bring the property into use. I'd go further and take the property off them if empty for more than 12 months. South Sefton is becoming derelict because of this
- This action will open the way for more houses available to be sold to ease the lack of housing
- First one I absolutely agree with. Second one I think the landlord perhaps needs a month to prepare a property and source another tenant in. The landlord will only pass any charges onto the next tenant. Unless you can prevent this why penalise tenants?
- Should give people 3 months at no charge to sort their affairs out. six months at 50% then no discount.
- Hopefully this will help move owners of empty properties into a position to sell properties on which can be redeveloped which in the long term will help reduce the housing waiting list.
- We have ended up with 2 properties due to house sale falling through and having to pay 2 lots of council tax and it is crippling me been paying over 300 a month and on low income
- House opposite me in Bootle empty for at least 10yrs + almost derelict. Shouldn't be any incentive to leave houses empty when councils are using B&B accommodation. I'd double the charge.
- I don't think there should be any empty property discounts. Gives the wrong signal
- Make landlords responsible by reducing the discounts

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- Ensure that these developers that buy old houses cheaply to do up and sell on for a large profit should be given a reasonable completion date and if not sold or completed by that date charge them full council tax.
- There should be a maximum time limit on properties which are left empty awaiting probate There are cases where houses are empty for over 30 years and have still not been probated despite their owner passing away in the mid 1980's
- This will encourage those that have an empty property to take some responsibility for the upkeep. As someone who has lived next door to an empty property for 4 years, it is awful
- If you own a property you should still pay Council Tax on it.
- If people have purchased uninhabitable properties with the intention of doing them up to move in to they do not need additional cost of council tax. They are likely paying council tax elsewhere whilst they do up the property. I believe reducing council tax on uninhabitable or empty properties is a way of helping property owners bring their property into a habitable state quicker.
- I think that they disproportionately affect the owners because they would pay a great amount when others who cost the community so much more aren't made to pay . It is very wrong. The burden of cost will bring worry and hardship to many. You take choice from such people who may have personal reasons for not selling a property.

3.4.4 Full responses from respondents who Disagreed or Strongly Disagreed with the proposals are shown below.

- The one month discount should be removed completely.
- The uninhabitable discount should not be removed. How can you charge for a property that has no roof, no wall or is unsafe and undergoing structural works to return the property to a safe standard for habitation?
- Strongly disagree with removal of uninhabitable discount.
- Morally questionable to charge for an unsafe property.
- This penny pinching money grabbing action may force people to occupy an unsafe dwelling with dangerous consequences.
- We have taken on a property that cannot be bought by a mortgage which takes a lot of money to transform to be habitable again no council tax can be obtained till property back in circulation so would be harsh to charge full rate agree with 50% feel that is fair
- People moving into empty properties already have a lot of expenses and reducing discount would not help them at all.
- You say you want to create an incentive to property owners to occupy/tenant their properties but if no uninhabited discount whilst the work is done is available, what incentive is there in that? May as well just not rush at getting

the work done, leave it empty for 2yrs and then furnish it. Unless you're a landlord wanting rent.....

- The discounts are a helpful financial support for those renovating properties that are not in a liveable state and therefore should remain.
- landlords are already being penalised as the property is empty, with no income. This will make it worse. Also, services used are very few, so landlords would simply be subsidising others.
- Flooding and uninsurable risk can render properties uninhabitable. Who can afford insurance and who can afford Council Tax? Perhaps the Waspi women would have something to say about money grabbing officials. Pay the pensions due then let's discuss further.
- Owning a property that I let out, I find it very frustrating that I have to pay council tax on the property if it is uninhabited. Fair enough if I was just allowing the property to sit empty, but once empty it gets renovated and goes back on the market immediately, this period should be discounted at 50% or more, as this inhabited state is out of my hands.
- I strongly disagree as my home has been inhabitable for the last 12 months and so I'm living with my parents still I'm not using all local services e.g. rubbish collections.
- Properties are empty for various reasons. It should not be an automatic process. Feel this would probably impact lower income families rather than those on higher incomes.
- From personal experience, when a loved one dies and subsequently leaves a property empty, there are many things to pay for like funeral expenses. At least having 100% council tax reduction gives some release of pressure.
- The council should offer a longer discount to homeowners who leave their home empty for a period of time if there are certainly circumstances e.g. the house is for sale or rent, or are undergoing significant renovations or building works that prevent the owners living there.
- For owners with properties that have been empty for a long period they should receive support to encourage them to take the next steps to move towards sale, renovation or rental.
- I think there are differing sets of circumstances. My own experience of this was when my mum died in 2014 – it took me several weeks to clean out her home and eventually put it up for sale, and another 8 months to sell it. I'm glad I didn't have the additional burden of council tax during this time and feel sorry for anyone in future in this position if this proposal goes ahead. That said, there may be instances of profiteering landlords who take advantage on the system. I don't know how you could differentiate.
- Councils are going too far with these measures No welfare considerations of situations difficulties people may have regarding homes whether uninhabitable or unoccupied. Far too many crass unloving assumptions being made. Councils are now seen as greedy and behaving in authoritative uncontrolled

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way without any consideration for those that employ you. This will in the end lead to a demise of control and loss of funds,

- Hello, Its simple. If you want the rental housing stock to be kept in good condition then don't penalise the people trying to do it. Find a way to give Council tax relief to Landlords who refurbish property between tenants either as a simple repair and redecorate, or a substantial refit.
- We are in the process of renovating a property and have to wait to put our house up for sale until it is virtually habitable, as we are paying full council tax at our existing property within the same council area this has helped us greatly only having to pay 50% , we cannot claim back our stamp duty funds until we sell our existing property and begin to live in the renovated property.
- I think it is unfair to have no discount on properties that can't be lived in. Usually there will be a reason that is only temporary so offering some discount for a short period seems fair (as I'm sure money is having to be spent to get the property back to a living state) rather than nothing at all!
- I buy houses that are in need of total renovation and make them into lovely family homes. I have used the 50% discount on Ctax twice in 2 years and the property goes from the ugliest house in the road to the best. I usually turn them around in 6-7 months, never need the full 12 months discounts. But with legal fees, estate agents' fees, and the big one stamp duty it is becoming almost not worth developing the properties anymore. adding more and more expense will put off improving homes and NOT do what you are trying to achieve by improving vacant homes.
- As a Private Landlord we are seen as an endless source of revenue for the council. New legislation has been introduced which entails most of our properties have to be licenced. Not only do I have to pay for the privilege of having a licence, the works that have to be carried out in order to comply run into thousands with no hint of grants to carry out these works. It is now prevalent for Tenants to leave the properties in such disorder it takes at least a month to make them habitable again. This is another expense we are having to deal with as I am sure are Housing Associations and your own Housing Stock. As Landlords we provide vital housing but it is becoming more and more difficult with the added costs which just keep coming with no increase of Housing Benefit to meet the rents.
- I fully understand what the Council is trying to do. But it is very important that the Council is firstly satisfied that the discount is GENUINE if not then NO discount simple!
- This is penalising everyone with the poorer being hit the hardest. Struggling landlords are hit badly but even those with homes that are trying to renovate and make a nice home for themselves, it is not acceptable to reduce discounts so heavily when the costs would shoot up so much higher. It's not even a slight increase in costs, it's huge. Not all landlords have lots of cash and definitely not all home owners. Properties can be empty or uninhabitable for many reasons. Particularly if cash runs out for renovation etc on a home or rental flat. Or a sale has fallen through of an empty property. I have lost

thousands in council tax costs for the reasons above and I'm not wealthy at all. It's a very damaging new law to bring in and hits everyone not just the rich.

- Have you seen the carnage in the high streets? Recession looms. Private landlords are underpinning housing need. Between the local authority charging full rate for an empty property (do not insult our intelligence by arguing it benefits from the same LA services, it does not, because it is empty) and the government stealing what was a genuine tax relief on mortgage interest payments, you are killing the viability of renting for many small private landlords and also driving rents up. I suggest you take a stroll down Lord Street, Southport. Once a jewel in Sefton's crown. And hang your heads in collective shame.
- It is not always easy to find a suitable tenant straight away after one tenant moved out - people have to give notice on their current properties before taking on another! When the property is empty none of the services are being used and therefore the property owner is being charged twice for council tax and this is unfair! If anything a longer discount should be given than just one month on an empty property!
- If you have no idea of the circumstances as to why the property is uninhabitable then this is just blindly punishing genuine people
- Have to be careful not to make it desirable to leave properties empty so people can use this as an effective tax loophole
- In my opinion if a property is suffering from structural issues and/or needs a full refurbishment then these should be given the 12 months free. The person involved in purchasing this property whether it be a new purchaser or landlord is taking all the financial risk and won't be living in the premises. It is outrageous to charge them council tax whilst they are renovating a rundown building and it stinks of greed from the council once again.
- What services are you actually providing to an empty property where you need to charge?? I do agree with charging if a property is long term empty say 6 months or more but not whilst someone is making an effort to breathe life into a property and community.
- The current discount supports landlords to find new tenants, repair properties after poor tenants or to have time to sell a house. I was forced to rent my property as it is negative equity. I do not make a profit on it. The area the house is in is poorly maintained by the council and surrounded by anti-social behaviour, therefore unattractive to a buyer. I rely on the discount during transitional times.
- If a tenant leaves the process of finding a new one and referencing (especially if there is a problem) can take 8 weeks. Renovations are required to meet safety regs and provide nice places to live - you may have to wait for trades or decide not to bother. If you buy somewhere to renovate and bring back into use, planning and trades can take ages. So it's another in a series of landlord bashing taxes. Another rental property likely to be lost from the market. Or of course I increase the rent. I cannot absorb anymore.

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- I never got any discount after the first month of my flat being empty even though it was uninhabitable. The officer that came to look at it smugly said he could have it ready to use in a few weeks. No allowance for the fact that I had not received any rent for 6 months because of Universal tax credits then tenant died so I didn't get a penny and now I am struggling to find the money to make it habitable. How does charging full tax help a landlord get a flat ready to use again ????
- Inherited a flat. We are pensioners and have difficulty selling due to housing association part owner.
- Previous owner paid no council tax. We have difficulty making payments through no fault of ours
- Think it unfair that someone has to pay Council Tax if no one is living in a property and are therefore not using many of the services the Council Tax pays for.
- I am part owner of a property that is inherited from my parents, it has just been put into our names 22 months after the death, it has now been put up for sale but the agents are having little response. The problem with empty properties is Solicitors dragging their feet for little work to try to justify their fees, similarly with Estate Agents.
- Most good landlords will endeavour to fill their properties to gain the rent. This usually takes about 3 months on average due to property maintenance following a tenant's departure and the usual security and credit checks etc. Pay 50% council tax is not large burden in the short term.
- However is the property required a lot of repairs following a tenant's departure as some are not very house proud it could take up to 6 months to get the property straight again so while the property is undergoing those repairs then reducing it to 0% would be a welcome benefit. After 6 months most landlords will have endeavoured to get the property filled again.
- We own a 'Listed' Thatched cottage that requires a complete new roof and other essential work. Sefton's Planning Department has taken over six months to grant permission to do the repairs, thus losing half of the 12 months discount! Due to the 'Listing' requirements, the roof has to be re-thatched, and there are only two Master Thatcher's in the North-West of England. The Thatcher we have engaged to do the work, Wayne Halfpenny from Manchester, has a long waiting list of up to three years, and we are now caught up in a lengthy situation through no fault of our own. **THIS IS AN EXAMPLE OF WHY YOUR NEW PROPOSALS MUST INCLUDE PROVISION FOR EXCEPTIONAL SITUATIONS SURROUNDING RARE PROPERTIES OF THIS KIND.**
- Once the cottage becomes habitable, our daughter will be moving in, thus releasing her own family home to be sold and provide additional accommodation in Sefton.
- Surely this is discriminatory against landlords and could be challenged in the courts?!! Landlords don't need additional "incentivising". This is just a cynical

attack on landlords who are a group that do not usually get any sympathy from the general public who perceive them as fat cats raking in the cash (which just isn't true in 99.9% of cases, most landlords only have one property and are often accidental landlords at that).

- Landlords provide a valued service and should be supported and not targeted or discriminated against by the authorities. If the government funded housing properly there wouldn't be much of a need for landlords! The authorities (both central and local) should be supporting landlords, not continuing to make their lives ever more difficult and unsustainable. What make you think people can afford to extensively renovate and fix up a property which is otherwise uninhabitable?
- Having the uninhabitable discount allows owners to invest the money in making the property habitable sooner, rather than paying full council tax
- The circumstances as to why properties are uninhabitable are not always straightforward. What about fire or accidental damage, flooding etc.? Charging Council tax immediately would add to the burden. What about landlords where tenants vandalise properties when they leave? Properties that are proving difficult to sell. Charging Council tax immediately in these instances is unfair. It's fine to charge 200%+ where someone is deliberately keeping a property empty, but this would surely be the exception, not the normal. Each case should be decided on its own merit, not an inflexible 'one rule for everything'
- Any residential purchaser will suffer here whether it is making a property habitable to move in to or awaiting a purchaser after a house move. First time buyers will suffer as will anyone else trying to better themselves. It took me 6 months to make my house habitable.
- no 3 when a tenant gives months' notice to leave I advertise the property and hopefully get a new tenant however I cannot get a new tenancy agreement signed until the old tenant has actually vacated because if they don't I have nowhere to house the new tenant. the new tenant may have to give his current landlord a months' notice and therefore my property is "empty " for that month. reducing c/tax to 50% in those situations is rather unfair. with regards no 2 if the property is being advertised for let some discount should be allowed
- I am trying to sell my late mother's flat. It's not sold for over one year and shortly I will have to pay 200% Council Tax on it if it doesn't sell. Doesn't seem fair
- Only in the event of fire on family home rebuilds should discounts be applied. Landlords should not benefit from reductions. Single occupant should receive more discounts due to reduced demand on services
- After a tenant leaves it is not always possible to re let a property or sell a property to get it back on the housing stock within 3 months. The old rule of 3 months discount was much fairer particularly now that it so prolonged to get an eviction through the courts if needed.
- Empty council properties are they costing the tax payer in higher council tax fees.

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- Removing the discount will force landlords to put properties back up for rent straight away when tenants leave at the end of tenancies. Not allowing them to opportunity to carry out upgrades & refurbishments, this in turn will reduce the quality of the rental housing stock in the borough. At a time when there is lack of rental housing in Sefton you should be offering the PRS tax breaks not removing them. this will ultimately end up with landlords to selling up. This will increase the burden on the council who will have to pay for more hotels and B&Bs for temporary accommodation for residents who have no alternates to social housing.
- As a landlord of 5 properties I obviously want my properties occupied, BUT, when a tenant leaves I think it's unfair to make a landlord pay council tax immediately as obviously I need to do repairs, redecorating and find a new tenant.
- This can sometimes take a few months to do properly. I think 3 months is fairer. But I think properly that are left empty for more than 12 months should be charged double council tax.
- I have personally experienced having an uninhabitable property after suffering a burst pipe in the loft right down to the ground floor of my property. I had to vacate my home whilst works were carried out which took a lot longer than originally predicted. I think it would be unfair to cancel the uninhabitable discount.
- I do not think that the uninhabitable discount should be reduced to 0%, as this would not encourage a prospective owner to buy a dilapidated property to do up and bring back in use. Perhaps consideration could be given to reducing the length of time from 12 to 6 months.
- Council Tax is expensive enough.
- If a property is uninhabitable, not just vacant, I can't see the rationale in charging Council Tax on it. No services would be provided to the property so what would the charge be for? I know of at least one person whose home was flooded and had to be gutted and dried out before renovation was possible. In this scenario would Council Tax be charged in future? It would not improve the speed of repair or encourage quicker occupation of the property. On the second point, if a rented property becomes vacant it surely isn't always possible to find a new tenant within just a few days? I think the existing arrangement is already too punitive. It seems the Council are looking for ways to make easy money rather than encouraging occupancy of vacant properties.
- As an independent landlord I feel it is wrong to suggest there would not be a reduction if a home is undergoing major repairs making the property uninhabitable. As a landlord we have a duty to ensure any property is upkept to a good standard yet if we choose to invest in doing so we would be further penalised by charges for council tax services we would not be utilising due to the property being empty.
- Charging for services that would not be used in an empty property is unfair when you choose to act in good faith and invest in a property for somebody

else to make a comfortable home in. It would encourage unscrupulous landlords to delay carrying out essential repairs knowing they would be penalised in such a way with further charges.

- I have been a landlord in the past and understand how difficult it can be to organise a new tenant to go straight in following the vacation of the previous tenant.
- It needs to be considered that not all tenants leave a property in a fit state to re let immediately.
- it also needs to be considered that RSL's are often not for profit and charging for empty properties will make it an increasing cost that will reduce the available money for repair, and the ability to keep rents low.
- Private landlords will just pass the cost on to tenants, who are already struggling in an increasingly expensive market.
- People should be given a reduction to help them fund renovation projects, the property would become habitable quicker. Landlords usually have to redecorate after a tenant leaves.
- These proposals will be highly detrimental to disadvantaged/low income people. Example: family on low income who inherited an empty uninhabitable house (no usable kitchen or bathroom facilities for a start) when the father of one of them passed away, moved into the property (freeing up their previously rented accommodation and no longer needing to claim housing benefit), but could only do so after major works were carried out to make it habitable (it took about a year to get it all sorted). They didn't have the funds to make this happen quickly and wouldn't have been able to do it at all if they'd had to pay full council tax during this period.
- Owners may not have funds to repair uninhabitable properties. An additional financial burden makes it more likely they will walk away. (An empty property doesn't cost the council anything as no services are provided).
- A month isn't very long, and a property can easily be empty for that time between owners. Again an empty property isn't costing the council anything as no services are provided.
- We have recently been unfortunate enough to have been "had over" by a very unscrupulous tenant who abandoned the property in a distressing state after failing to pay her rent and causing us to regain possession via the courts. We are significantly out of pocket, despite only ever acting in good faith, and on top of the loss of rent and legal fees we have had to invest heavily in the property to make it habitable again. Whilst the tenant is not directly to blame for the fact that the kitchen and bathroom were a bit dated and the house was in need of some upgrading, she was certainly the catalyst that made all the work essential at this time rather than in stages, over time and in a planned and budgeted for manner. We gained the property back in mid-May and have undertaken significant work since then, the bathroom and kitchen are still not refitted but hopefully in another month or so it should be back to something like a complete house again. All the time we have still had to pay the

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mortgage and insurance for the property as well as, of course, our own family household costs. We have two children who also require our time and financial investment so all in all the last 12 months have been extremely stressful and financially crippling. One small concession we have had in our favour during the time since we gained possession of the property back was the initial free month and subsequent 50% discount on the council tax. It is a relatively small amount in the scheme of things, compared to what we have/are having to pay out but it is still a relief to get that concession which is only fair due to the property being empty. We have invested in the property as necessary to ensure that when it is available to future tenants is it clean and comfortable and to a standard that anyone deserves to live in so if we were to be penalised by having to pay full Council Tax on a property that is not utilising any of the amenities/services funded by the Council Tax then it would be completely unfair and unjust. We would strongly urge you not to make the proposed changes and continue to offer what is fair and decent and right to any person acting in good faith and investing in their property. What is the alternative? Unscrupulous landlords will delay carrying out essential work because of unfair changes that they will have to pay? Privately rented property standards will decrease. I don't see that it is beneficial to anyone. Your letter states that any funds raised from the proposed changes will be used to fund statutory services and to keep council tax levels down but it is completely unfair, why should someone who is not utilising the statutory services at a specific property pay for other people's benefit, surely all charges and taxes should be fair and just and charging someone for something they are not using is neither. With regards to the current 100% discount for the first month a property is empty that is also fair and should not be changed. If a tenant moves out there is always work to be done by way of cleaning and clearing and at least minor decoration. It also takes considerable time to market the property, have relevant checks carried out on potential tenants and assume they will need to give 1 months' notice on their current property therefore even 1 month discounted never covers the length of time it takes for someone new to move in but it is a fair reduction to start with. Reducing the discount just adds further financial burden on private landlords acting in good faith who are already in a situation of having to invest in a property and pay fees for finding a new tenant.

- If you buy a property which is uninhabitable you would still be paying council tax where you were living. It would be unfair to have to pay 2 full charges. This would put people off buying run down properties and make the empty homes issue worse. Rather than change the discount amount maybe consider just reducing the time from 12 to 6 months to give new owners time to get the essential work scheduled.
- This is just another example of all landlords being demonised and used as a cash cow by government instead of addressing the real issues. Sefton Council should understand that no reasonable landlord wants to leave a rental property empty for longer than they need to when it could be earning rent. The proposed change of the 100% discount on council tax relief to 50% for properties vacant for less than a month is particularly troubling. A good

landlord may need that month at the end of a tenancy to carry out any necessary work (which may include repairing damage caused by the tenant) ready for the next tenant.

- I have had an empty property previously when a leak caused major damage in my home and I was forced to move out. It took me months to rectify and I didn't have money to hurry it up. Not all empty properties are rich landlords who can't be bothered
- Southport has a large proportion of older property that badly need updating and improvement. If a family inherits a house after a bereavement, a month is too short a period for families to adjust to decide their next step. Landlords could be left with empty properties if tenants leave. Which will deter landlords from providing an essential service as lots of younger people are not able to get on to the property ladder.

4. Equality Impact Assessment

4.1 Introduction

Any change to function, provision or policy that may have an effect on people is automatically subject of the Equality Act 2010. As such the 'decision makers' have a statutory duty to pay 'due regard' to equality legislation and the potential discriminatory impact that changes have on service users. To inform decision makers, an 'equality analysis report' is submitted to them at the time of decision making for them to consider equality implications as part of their final decision making.

To meet equality legislation public bodies have to consider Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to: -

- (a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- (b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and person who do not share it.

4.2 Protected Characteristics

Equality Law (Equality Act 2010) is clear that there are characteristics intrinsic to an individual against which it would be easy to discriminate. Section 149 (the Public-Sector Equality Duty) cites the goals of the Act and the characteristics, known as 'protected characteristics' against which we have to test for discrimination. These characteristics are gender, race/ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity and disability.

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4.3 Consultation

Sefton Council is considering reducing the Council Tax discounts on properties deemed uninhabitable for a period of up to 12 months, and for empty properties empty for up to 1 month.

The changes will help to reduce the number of empty homes and bring them back into use through sale or renting and align the level of discounts available to those offered across the Liverpool City Region. Additional income raised from the changes to the discounts will help support the provision of Council services.

As part of the consultation, equalities questions were asked in connection to gender, age, disability and ethnicity. The main issues that the Council has to consider in relation to the proposed changes to the scheme in relation to equality and diversity are:

- Disabled people, on very low income, who are unable to carry out the necessary renovations to properties themselves or pay someone to do it for them.
- Where owners are struggling to cope with managing the property they own.

4.4 Impacts

The tables below highlight what evidence we have on how the proposed changes will affect different groups and communities in relation to equalities and human rights. Where numbers are presented which refer to the survey, this relates to the number of people who responded to the equality questions in the survey and aligned to the question on impacts. People who responded to the survey and reported any impacts, whether this was a lot of impact or no impact, did so from an individual perspective. The table recognises the responses to the survey but also considers any detrimental impact on the protected characteristic as a whole and includes the mitigations the Council has in place.

Breakdown of respondents by Gender

In terms of the 218 respondents to the survey 106 identified as a woman, 90 as a man, 17 preferred not to say and 5 did not answer.

185 respondents identified as being the same gender as at birth, 1 identified as being a different gender to birth and 32 did not answer or preferred not to say.

Breakdown of respondents by Age ranges

In terms of the 218 respondents to the survey, 211 gave the following age ranges:

Age	Total
18-29	8
30-39	27
40-49	48

50-59	64
60-69	47
70-79	15
80-84	1
85+	1
Not answered	7

Breakdown of respondents by Postcode

Of the 218 respondents to the survey, the following postcodes were submitted.

L10	L20	L20	L22	L23	L30
3	18	15	8	25	8
L31	L37	PR8	PR9	Outside Sefton	No Response
8	17	52	49	7	8

Disability

15 respondents identified as being disabled when asked that if they have HIV, cancer or diabetes they would be classed as 'disabled' under the Equality Act 2010.

Other Disabilities

When asked 'do you have any disabilities?' 4 indicated mental health problems, 1 indicated being on the Autistic Spectrum/Asperger's Syndrome, 5 indicated problems with hearing, 1 indicated problems seeing, 9 indicated they have difficulty walking or moving about or use a wheelchair. 38 did not answer, or preferred not to say.

Ethnicity

Respondents were asked to identify their ethnicity.

Ethnicity	Total
White British	109
White English	67
White Irish	4
White Scottish	2
White Polish	1
Mixed Background Other	3
Mixed Background – Asian & White	2
Other White background	4
Chinese	1
Prefer not to say / no response	25

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Religion or Belief

88 Respondents indicated a religion or belief. 86 identified as Christian, 1 as other religion and 1 did not specify the religion.

Relationships (Sexual Orientation)

164 Respondents indicated their relationships. 158 identified as heterosexual, 2 identified as bisexual, 1 identified as lesbian and 3 identified as gay.

4.5 **Impacts**

Protected Characteristic	
Gender	No inadvertent bias on the basis of gender is indicated. We have not identified any impacts that need mitigation.
Race/Ethnicity	No inadvertent bias on the basis of race/ethnicity is indicated. The proposals do not treat people of different race/ethnicity groups any differently and we have not identified any impacts that need mitigation.
Religion and Belief	No inadvertent bias on the basis of religion or belief. The proposals do not treat persons of different religions or beliefs any differently and we have not identified any impacts that need mitigation.
Sexual Orientation	No inadvertent bias on the basis of sexual orientation is indicated. The proposals do not treat persons of different sexual orientation any differently. We have not identified any impacts that need mitigation.
Age	No inadvertent bias on the basis of age is indicated. Young people looking to join the property ladder or rent an affordable property may be affected as more empty properties are made available. We have not identified any impacts that need mitigation.
Gender Reassignment	No inadvertent bias on the basis of gender reassignment age is indicated in the proposals. We have not identified any impacts that need mitigation.
Pregnancy and Maternity	No inadvertent bias on the basis of pregnancy and maternity is indicated. We have not identified any impacts that need mitigation.
Disability	No inadvertent bias on the basis of disability is indicated. We have not identified any impacts that need mitigation.

4.6 **Mitigations**

Key measures in place

- Any short term financial hardship or other exceptional circumstances affecting a person's ability to pay will be addressed by the Council's Discretionary Reduction

in Liability Policy, and the promotion of that policy, so additional support can be provided for those in exceptional need.

- Sefton Council will continue to provide proactive and tailored support for those Council Tax payers who struggle to make payments and will continue to ensure that recovery procedures identify cases where additional support might be required.
- A proactive approach will be taken to identify persons meeting the severe mental impairment conditions set out in the Council Tax Regulations with a view to exempting them from paying Council Tax.
- The Council will continue working with and supporting customers whose first language is not English.
- Customers affected by the proposals will be contacted directly and provided with clear explanation and offers of advice and support.
- The Council's website information will be updated to reflect the key changes and any issues identified

Increase in Long-Term Empty Homes Premium Consultation Findings

1. Background

A public consultation ran for 5 weeks from 29th October 2018 to 3rd December 2018.

The consultation requested views on the proposal to increase the premium charge from 50% to 100% from 1 April 2019.

It also asked for views on further options to increase the premium charged on properties that have been empty for longer than 5 years to 200% from 1 April 2020 and those empty for 10 years or more to 300% from 1 April 2021.

The consultation was available online and by paper form to download where required. Direct mailing was used to contact all Council Tax payers currently liable to pay the Empty Homes Premium, and the consultation was promoted internally through the service, including the Council's Empty Homes Team.

Letters about the consultation were also sent to various stakeholders including private and registered social landlords and our major preceptors Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service, Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner, and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority.

Information about the survey was also available at Council libraries and the One Stop Shops. The Council also promoted the consultation on its website, intranet, via a press release and the Council's social media.

The aim of the survey is to ensure that the views of those Council Tax payers affected, other stakeholders and members of the public are considered before the decision is made to implement the premium and that any exceptions to the premium be considered.

2. Consultation Options

The options consulted on were as follows,

Question 1 How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposals to double the Council tax premium on properties that have been left empty for more than 2 years from 50 per cent to 100 per cent.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Question 2 Do you have any comments relating to this proposal? You may wish to highlight any circumstances where this premium should not apply other than those examples mentioned earlier that are already exempt from Council Tax.

Question 3 How strongly do you agree or disagree with the potential future changes to increase the premium to 200 per cent on homes left empty from 5 to 10 years from April 2020 and to 300 per cent on those empty for more than 10 years from 1 April 2021?

- o Strongly agree
- o Agree
- o Neither agree nor disagree
- o Disagree
- o Strongly disagree

Question 4 Do you have any comments relating to the potential future changes to increase the premium to 200 per cent on homes left empty from 5 to 10 years from April 2020 and to 300 per cent on those empty for more than 10 years from 1 April 2021? You may wish to highlight any circumstances where this premium should not apply other than those examples mentioned earlier that are already exempt from Council Tax.

3. Analysis of survey results

- o In total, there were 129 responses to the on-line consultation, which is relatively substantial for a premium affecting only 645 properties.
- o Details of the capacity in which those who responded to the on-line survey are listed in the table below: -

(a)	A Member of the public	78
(b)	A Local business owner	2
(c)	A landlord of a property in Sefton that isn't empty	24
(d)	A landlord of a property that is empty	17
(e)	An elected Member	0
(f)	A local charity, voluntary or community organisation	0
(g)	Other (please specify) Executor	4
	No response provided	4

- 3.1 Of the 129 respondents to the online Questionnaire, the following postcodes were submitted

Postcode breakdown					
Outside Sefton	L20	L21	L22	L23	L30
9	11	7	6	9	2
L31	L37	L38	PR8	PR9	Not Completed
3	7	1	19	19	36

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3.2 Responses to questions

Question 1 How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposals to double the Council tax premium on properties that have been left empty for more than 2 years from 50 per cent to 100 per cent.

Strongly agree	51
Agree	15
Neither agree nor disagree	7
Disagree	12
Strongly disagree	43
No response provided	1

Question 2 Do you have any comments relating to this proposal? You may wish to highlight any circumstances where this premium should not apply other than those examples mentioned earlier that are already exempt from Council Tax.

	Comment
L20	<p>Most Landlords don't deliberately leave property's empty for more than a year.</p> <p>As a property owner, I'm trying to find a tenant. Increased council tax penalises me for this.</p> <p>I agree that increasing the council tax on long term empty properties is a fair approach as long as constructive advice is available from the council. I feel that the initial exemption of one month for vacant unfurnished properties should be extended to two months.</p> <p>There may also be economic reasons for the property being empty. Only if the owner does not cooperate with the Council to change this should the premium may be in place.</p> <p>Monies raised should be put towards social housing care.</p> <p>Why should anyone have to be "incentivised", or to put it another way, bullied and forced into occupying, or putting their property up for rent, or even for sale, just because it has been empty for a certain length of time? It is THEIR house, NOT a COUNCIL house, and therefore it is the OWNER's right to choose what they do with their property, as long as it is not illegal or anti-social, and all the bills are paid. It is irrelevant how long a private house stays empty, as long as it is kept in a reasonable state of repair and is not causing any problems to the neighbours, so therefore, the owner should only have to pay the standard rate of Council Tax like other property owners, NOT an inflated rate. It is not up to private property owners to solve the Council's housing problem, nor is it up to them to be an easy target to solve Sefton Council's financial problems. The Council should be targeting those who deliberately evade paying Council tax, not ripping off those who do pay - this</p>

	<p>proposal is just wrong. Just because somebody owns a property does not mean that they are rich. I inherited my house from my parents who worked extremely hard to buy a house which they would eventually leave to me; they were very proud of being able to do this for me. As well as having a strong emotional attachment to the house, I am disabled, on a very low income, and therefore unable to renovate the house myself, or pay for a builder to do it. Why should I be penalised by having to pay a huge premium? I have done nothing wrong, I am not a scrounger who expects something for nothing; I pay all the bills on the property. Likewise, somebody who is working and on a low income cannot afford to pay a builder to renovate their property and so would have to do it themselves at weekends and after work - a long job. Why should they be penalised with a huge premium?</p> <p>An excellent proposal. The Council needs to generate revenue in any way possible.</p> <p>The refurbishment of this property is progressing well & being done to a high standard. This is taking longer & costing more than we anticipated, but the property is in good repair & not causing any nuisance or issue for neighbours (with whom we are on very good terms) or Sefton Council. The additional imposition of Council Tax costs would inevitably lead to financial pressures which could offset completion of refurbishment works. We are retired people who are doing our best to look after a house that has been in our family since 1941.</p> <p>My property was seriously vandalised by last council tax tenant and I just haven't got the funds (in excess of £3000) required for repair and replacement.</p> <p>As a private landlord with one property, our former home, the additional financial burden of having an empty property was not one i was expecting. Unfortunately, tenants are not perfect and i have suffered through non-payment of rent, eviction costs and extensive repairs of damage caused by the tenant. So, despite having to meet the mortgage on the property while it is empty, and pay for repairs the recent changes in council tax cause further burden. Originally a 6 month exemption period applied to empty properties. That has now reduced to one month. The increase in premiums adds further to my financial issues.</p> <p>It is not my intention that the property remains empty, why would it? But additional council tax premiums simply prevent or delay the necessary work required to get the property in rental condition.</p>
L21	<p>If a property is up for sale they should not have to pay the charges.</p> <p>Your proposal would punish people who are already punished and will do nothing to improve the poor housing situation. There are many reasons for houses to be left unoccupied for a length of time and none of these are to benefit the owner. Your proposal, and</p>

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	<p>indeed your current policy, merely compounds the financial hardship. It would be far more effective to offer help to the owners of long term occupied homes to get them ready for sale/rental. Loans and grants should be available. Compulsory purchase could also be an option should the owners keep a property empty for two years or, perhaps, a commandeering of the property to re rented to deserving people with the equivalent of social rent only going to the owners. There are many solutions to the housing shortage and the number of unoccupied homes and none of them involve imposing what amounts to monthly fines.</p> <p>Sometimes people own properties that have fallen into disrepair and they do not have the funds to renovate it.</p> <p>I think this possibly to apply to landlords, however I wouldn't agree with it for our circumstances. My mother passed away and we have been trying to sell her bungalow. Naturally it's in our interests to get rid as soon as possible but it's not been as easy as it sounds. The property has sold 6 times, but the sale has been withdrawn for one reason or another (not due to anything wrong with the property) so here we are over 12 months down the line. We are constantly worried about the property being broken into because there are no police to deal with that. I have emailed many times about recruiting more police but she doesn't reply. The fact is that your council probably owns many of the empty properties anyway.</p>
L22	<p>If someone can afford to leave a property empty for that length of time they're clearly able to afford it, so the charges are an entirely appropriate incentive to correct the commercial priorities.</p> <p>Unfortunately, I am unaware of all the reasons that people have for not paying their council tax on an empty property but the existing exclusions should remain.</p> <p>For small landlords, this is a crippling double penalty when added to the already lost the rental income. Landlords with large portfolios (exceeding £1 million) who might have property for investment purposes can afford to pay 100%.</p> <p>No one should be expected to pay more than 100% charge. The services for the property are the same for everyone whether the property is empty or occupied. In fact, empty properties are not impacting on Sefton Council services for a property.</p> <p>The property needs work and this further expense would further delay the work going ahead If the owner is living on a pension may be some assistance could be provided.</p>
L23	<p>As a landlord in Sefton I have previously been impacted by the 50% additional charge. I have purchased empty properties which have required full renovations before I could find tenants. As one property had already exceeded the 2 years of being empty when I</p>

purchased it I was liable for the additional council tax charges. This I felt was unfair. Surely taking a property which is not liveable and has been empty for some time and doing the necessary renovations to provide additional affordable homes in the area is a good thing and should be rewarded and not punished. That said I agree that properties should not be kept empty and a penalty should be in place for those who sit on empty properties. I am aware that this can be a problem in some areas I think a fair addition to the new rules would be to reset the clock on these properties when newly purchased to provide landlords like myself the opportunity and incentive to improve living standards within Sefton.

There are a number of unused/ derelict buildings and it would be a positive result if an increased council tax payment forced the owners into letting or selling them, to bring vibrancy to the area. However, those with legitimate reasons for leaving the property empty should not be penalised.

I think the 100% charge should be applied after 6 months of being empty. It is inappropriate to leave a property empty while so many people need a home and councils are having financial difficulties.

It might make the owner make more of an effort to get the property occupied.

It is crucial that people do not continue to have incentives to leave houses empty by the current lower council tax rate, given the numbers of homeless people and others who may be living in cramped conditions. This increase would hopefully be some deterrent.

I think you should look at the finances of the owners of these properties. If they live elsewhere it's possible that they can't afford more council tax and by taking them to court you would waste even more money. I don't think it should be a complete ban on the exemption of the 50% tax as it is now. I even think that is too much - isn't the tax for facilities used and if no-one lives there they don't use any facilities!

I would suggest the increase should be even larger, say to 200%, to have a greater effect on the situation.

It is immoral for people to have unused living accommodation while there are so many families without a home.

I feel that a lot of people for good reasons could have a property for 2 or 3 years empty so 50% seems fairer

Where probate has been granted and the property is for sale

My parents are stuck living next door to an empty property that has

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been that way in excess of 10 years. Owners refuse to sell yet put solar shades on a roof that is in a bad state of repair? My elderly parents are petrified that squatters will move in and we have no way of contacting these selfish owners. My parents and their neighbours try to keep the front of the house tidy so it isn't obvious what the situation is but are too elderly to continue to keep that up. It is a disgrace the place is left to rot. Hit the owners where it hurts - in their pocket and this will hopefully make them do something about the property.

The government and local authorities are taking a totally simplistic view and failing to understand the complex series of factors that can cause properties to remain empty, including for example, simple lack of market demand, or lack of financial resource on the part of the owner to bring dilapidated properties back from the brink back into use.....even just these two example factors can have a complex inter-relationship, with one interacting on the other. The proper and productive approach to this problem would be to abandon the stick (or at least not make it any bigger) and throw a carrot or two at it.

I understand why the proposal would be implemented for empty properties that could be brought back into use. However, this should not apply to circumstances such as the one that I am in. I am executor to my mother's will - she died in January 2015 and probate was obtained in May 2015, since when the property has been up for sale. It is a one bedroomed retirement shared ownership flat in XX. It went on the market at £65,000 and has been reduced over time to its current asking price of £44,950 and has been on the market with two estate agents. The shared ownership is with a Housing Association and they are difficult to deal with and I have lost one buyer due to their incompetence. In the meantime, not only do I have to pay council tax at an additional 50% rate, but I shall have to pay monthly service charges and a sinking fund charge if ever it is sold. There will be very little money left by the time this all happens. I feel very strongly that I should not be having to pay any council tax, as I receive no services whatsoever, never mind an additional premium. Due to myself spending lots of my time caring for my mother, I managed to keep her out of Sefton's Social Services system, and she never needed any additional support from the Council. Also, the Council itself does nothing to help me sell the flat - sale boards are not allowed outside the listed building. I am unable to bring the flat into use unless it is sold, one of the conditions of the lease is that I am unable to rent it out. I am extremely concerned whether there will be sufficient funds if the council tax charge is further increased. In circumstances where an executor to a will is unable to sell or rent a property and can prove that they have done everything possible to sell it, there should be an exemption.

For someone who is already paying nearly £250.00 a month taking it to nearly £400.00 a month is just too much.

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L30	<p>If a property is up for sale, I can't see how you can penalise people who want to sell the property but it is taking longer than they wanted.</p> <p>Property's that are up for sale should be exempt from the increase.</p> <p>We have had the house up for sale for 2 years but can't sell it. Properties that are on the market and empty should be exempt from this.</p> <p>When properties are left empty when owners have gone into care the council should check that they are indeed empty and should take the waived council tax payments from the estate when the property is sold.</p> <p>I strongly disagree with this proposal for the following reasons. I realise that everyone's circumstances are different but mine are as follows. I inherited the house when my father passed away. After being unable to find a buyer for the house I realised that I would have to complete some work on the house in order to bring it up to a standard to allow me to either sell or rent the property. As I have a home, wife and a young family which I need to support finances are quite tight. I agree that as I own the empty property I should contribute towards the council but asking for double or treble the council tax will not only make the payments impossible to afford and so just cause stress and anxiety and the possibility of court action for not being able to pay and also make it more difficult to pay to renovate the house</p>
L31	<p>I believe the premium should rise due to the current housing shortage and this increase may persuade private landlords to sell properties that they cannot rent.</p>
L37	<p>I think owners should have an opportunity to make a case to the Council to use its discretion to waive the premium where they have been unable to sell or bring their properties back into use due to other circumstances out of their control. The Council should also take the opportunity to provide help and support to owners of long-term empty homes to assist them in bringing these properties back into use. The Council should not waive the premium where owners are marketing their property at an inflated price as this will not help to increase the supply of affordable homes.</p> <p>Without room for discretion this is a very unfair tax to increase to 100%. not all property is just kept empty sometimes there are issues which mean you cannot get a new tenant and therefore are being unfairly penalised.</p> <p>Maybe it will force a few sales and reduce pressure on the precious B Green Belt you seem so keen to destroy</p> <p>Council tax should be paid by all if empty or not.</p>

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	<p>Sheer extortion! An ill-considered 'blanket' approach. Appalling because you seem to want to penalise the very people who are trying to do the right thing. Our property is vacant again and we (3 beneficiaries) want to sell the retirement flat and that has been our desire since 2004. It has been marketed for sale continuously, through estate agents. For a period of about 5 years we rented it to a tenant (who has died). The flat is empty again and it is being marketed for sale, yet again. Try as we might we cannot sell the property which is in a block of retirement flats where other flats are regularly up for sale. We are competing with other flat owners (sellers) on the same site. The residents are all elderly so any would-be buyers have to be over 60 thereby creating a 'niche' market.</p> <p>It should be imposed after 1 year. 2 years is far too generous.</p> <p>I believe that a 50% initial increase is sufficient.</p> <p>When a property has genuinely been on the market with local estate agents the extra premium should not apply. When you are paying over £200 a month in management fees there is absolutely no reason to keep a property empty, which has been my personal experience. "Largely unfurnished" is too open to personal interpretation by council staff.</p>
PR8	<p>Awaiting planning permission (this process can sometimes be protracted and out of the control of the property owner)</p> <p>If somebody can afford to have an empty house they should be able to afford to contribute to the council tax fund also. There are too many vacant properties in the Borough, I also think if a property has been vacant for 5 years or more, the owners should lose the right to ownership and it automatically transfers to the Council, this if obviously where the owner can't be bothered to deal with any issues with the property</p> <p>Instead of increasing to 100% make it 150 - 200% This will force owners to get tenants or sell. Why does Sefton Council not Compulsory Purchase empty homes to use for homeless?</p> <p>This proposal, and the current 50% premium does NOT incentivise home owners of empty properties to "bring them back into use" as: You are charging more tax, therefore the owner has LESS money to sort their house out and 'bring it back into use'. Therefore, prolonging the period of time that the house will be empty. I believe that if the owner of the property is renovating it BEFORE they live in it or consequently sell the property, they should be exempt as the long-term plan is to "bring the property back into use". To ensure that this is true, council inspectors or a written council policy to state that all work undertaken on the property has to be evidenced and sent to the council.</p>

Strongly object as purchased with intent to downsize but having to wait to move as husband became ill and would not be suitable, will move to property on husband's death. Your proposal is just a punishment for anyone trying to plan responsibly.

What about an empty property that is up for sale but is not selling? They should not be penalised because of stagnant housing market.

We would not have properties standing empty for no reason, it would be either because there was work needed doing to it or we were unable to find a tenant, the fact that we have to pay council tax from day 1 is already crippling without increasing it further

As a Expat visiting my own fully furnished property for family visits as well as family members using it , If the council puts up the taxes I shall have to let it out for shorts lets which benefits neither I nor the Council. As someone using less public services the extra surcharge is unfair. This is our only home in the UK. Mine is not empty but is taxed as if it was.

I can accept that an empty property may warrant a 100% tax as the council is losing income on empty properties.

I (together with my brother) purchased an apartment on Lord Street for my mother to live in when she was in her 80s. She died, aged 101, 18 months ago and the property has been for sale since that time. The lease prevents us from letting it, or from selling it to someone under 55, or from selling it to a third party (eg the Council). We have offered it to the ground landlord without success. Each month it is unsold we have to pay approx. £500 Service Charge plus 100% Council Tax even though we receive no services from either RSL or the Council. I am a resident of Sefton and also pay full Council tax on the house I share with my wife. We have had the apartment redecorated to a high standard and we do use it whilst we are overnighing in Southport but we wish to sell. The purpose of the legislation is presumably to bring unused property to the market. We have been trying to sell for 18 months; it is currently listed at a price lower than others in the building. You should either target the ground landlords who enforce the restrictive conditions in the lease or make an exception for "very sheltered accommodation".

I just need to know if I can no longer manage the property will you take it off me. I have no other income but my husbands and disability pips. I have mental health issues, at the moment my husband is my carer. I do not come under the heading without capacity though if I am sick I would come under that category. I own no other property. The flat I own is not occupied but I would say it is my second home should I become homeless for whatever reason. I did approach your offices for help but they told me if no one was living there it was empty (however, it is furnished) so I would just have to carry on paying council tax. I don't really know

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	<p>what to do. I can't sell it the lady in the flat below has a life threatening illness. They have told me so over a period of several years. I find it difficult to cope.</p> <p>I always considered that a tax or rate had to be fair. If you are using the facilities you should pay for them. I already pay rates to Sefton as I live in their Borough. I have another property that I purchased to house my elderly mother who was a war widow. She died late last year and I put the flat up for sale. It will not sell because there are a number for sale and the service charge is so high. I don't use the council's facilities and I am desperately trying to sell but nobody wants to buy. I am currently paying 50% rates for a flat that nobody lives in nor uses any of the services that the Council provide. To increase the empty rate from 50% to 100% (and subsequently 200% and 300%) on a property that I am desperately trying to sell is patently unfair. The proposed increase was to target landlords who are deliberately leaving properties empty and not renting them out to tenants. This isn't the case with my circumstances. I know that Councils are strapped for cash and they will simply introduce this measure to increase revenue. I have the feeling that anything I write will eventually be ignored as raising money is paramount. I simply reiterate that the tax/rates must be fair.</p> <p>I cannot afford the mortgage I have on the property let alone increased council tax.!</p>
PR9	<p>I would love you to raise it to 100% considering the empty flat I am trying to sell is costing me 150% of the rateable value into the second year of being on the market.</p> <p>Authorities should be allowed to take all necessary steps to bring empty properties back into use. This should include compulsory purchase rather than increased Council Tax where property has been empty for 5 years or more.</p> <p>The whole point of council tax is to charge an occupant for using council services. If the property is empty there should actually be a nil charge never mind a 100% charge because there are no costs to the council.</p> <p>I am becoming elderly with an elderly husband and mobility problems and increasingly struggle to manage the only flat I own that is attached to and accessed via my own flat entrance. I have had really bad tenants and am reaching the point of not feeling able to go on renting emotionally and physically. If these council tax changes come into effect I will have to choose between bills I would struggle to pay, continuing to rent regardless of my health or selling the whole property.</p> <p>Great care must be taken to ensure the owner is not vulnerable. Penalties should be in place for any council staff member who fails to exercise due diligence.</p>

I have been trying to sell my house for 3 yrs over this period I have reduced the price by 80k in a desperate effort to sell. Some understanding from the council for those actively trying to sell would help enormously. I do agree those empty houses not for sale should have incentives to bring them back into homes. But this blunt instrument without some consideration for those of us already stressed about when will this house stop eating into my pension may just be seen as yet another way of bleed the tax payer.

Empty properties often fall into disrepair and neglect, and are not nice to see.

If not exempt and unwilling to sell or rent out, then the premium seems fair. Perhaps consideration should be given for discretion to waive the premium in genuine cases of inability to sell or rent out a property.

This is daylight robbery ! Sefton council still get paid the council tax whether the building is empty or not ? It should infect be reduced for empty properties as none of the services are being used if the property is empty ! Just sheer greed!

I think this is an excellent proposal as homes left empty for that long will tend to be neglected damaging the neighbourhood

There is a housing crisis whilst some of the wealthiest people are leaving properties to lay empty and unused, accumulating personal wealth at the expense of the majority. I fully support increasing the council tax levied. The only slight disagreement I have is the suggestion that this is a doubling of the council tax levied. What it is is a removal of a discount in council tax that has previously been applied.

Three years would be fairer than two. My property is empty because I cannot sell it at a reasonable price due to Brexit uncertainty. It remains on the market, but I have had few viewings and fewer offers, all well below comparable prices.

As an owner of a Residential Care Home we have a Cottage in the grounds. We cannot just rent this property out to anyone. The tenant has to have an enhanced DBS check, related someway to the business i.e. a member of staff. This significantly reduces the chance of renting out this property. CQC would not allow us to rent the property out to anyone due to the Vulnerability of the elderly people living in the Care Home. The cottage is also connected with all Fire related incidents. We test the Fire alarm weekly at the Care Home which is also sounded in the Cottage. If the Fire alarm went off it would also go off in the cottage. There are lots of issues associated with the suitability of the Tenant. We manage a retirement complex of 37 rental properties which have on average five or six empty at any one time. These properties are advertised

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	<p>weekly but it does not result in the properties all being let. We pay out enough in council tax already and to increase this further would be being penalised for a lack of suitable tenants that fit the criteria.</p> <p>My mother owns a flat in XX. Mum is 86 years old and she lives in a care home as she has dementia. I have an Order from the Court of Protection which allows me to act for Mum and part of that regime is that I need to show that I have acted in Mum's best interest and taken advice where necessary. Father passed away in 2007. Both Mum and Dad worked hard and saved in order that they would be reasonably if modestly provided in their later years. Part of the planning was the purchase of the flat. Over the past year I consulted with a financial adviser and Mum's solicitor. As a result, I concluded that there is little point as in selling the flat as interest rates are so low. The flat needs major improvements, particularly in the bathroom and the kitchen. If Mum funded these improvements and let the flat, it would time quite a while to recover the outlay. In addition, the cost of the works would deplete the pool of money Mum has to pay for her care. Currently Mum pays the standard levy plus 50%. The proposal is that she now pay even more council tax. Mum is basically confined to her care home and uses very little of the services provided by the local authority, but the proposal is for Mum to pay a further increased penalty simply because she has poor health.</p> <p>This must rank as the most ill thought out proposal since the bedroom tax. If you have a property to sell with a registered estate agent, why should you be penalised, because the market is suppressed and is difficult to sell. Unless you sell under market value, which I did, after trying to sell for two and a half years, paying 50% extra tax, just to get rid.</p> <p>The Empty Homes premium should be 100% only and should be for properties of £100,000 or over, not for property less than that amount as you are punishing poor people.</p>
Outside Sefton	<p>If the home is being advertised for rent, then this should not apply. I have a house that is in very good condition (newly refurbished), but still we are having trouble finding a tenant.</p> <p>Empty retirement flat belonging to my deceased father has been on market for 2 years - have reduced price but still no sale - I am paying maintenance charges and council tax outside my own area out of my savings - whilst I understand basic council tax has to be paid I think it is unfair to expect executors to pay an additional premium when there is nothing more they can do to sell the property.</p> <p>As a landlord if we had an empty property we would still have a mortgage to pay, and I feel it would be unfair to punish us further.</p> <p>Fully in agreement if no effort is being made to have the property occupied. However, I have had the property in Sefton on the</p>

	<p>market for sale ever since my mother passed away in May 2017. The lease does not allow me to let the apartment, and it can only be occupied by someone over 50. To charge 200% of the Council Tax seems totally unfair when I am doing everything I can to sell it. Surely in these circumstances, empty properties should also be exempt.</p> <p>I most certainly agree considering that Sefton is at present charging me 150% rates for an empty flat that I am desperately trying to sell. A 100% rate would be a relief to this pensioner.</p> <p>Depends on the circumstances as to why a property is unoccupied. An increase is unfair to those who intend to live in the property but can't at present due to extensive renovations to make a property habitable (council tax deductions with his regard are currently not sufficient with respect to the period of availability). Therefore, this only extends the period the property is uninhabitable and vacant due to unavailable cashflow to do the work.</p>
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Question 3 How strongly do you agree or disagree with the potential future changes to increase the premium to 200 per cent on homes left empty from 5 to 10 years from April 2020 and to 300 per cent on those empty for more than 10 years from 1 April 2021?

Strongly agree	48
Agree	15
Neither agree nor disagree	9
Disagree	10
Strongly disagree	46
No response provided	1

Question 4 Do you have any comments relating to the potential future changes to increase the premium to 200 per cent on homes left empty from 5 to 10 years from April 2020 and to 300 per cent on those empty for more than 10 years from 1 April 2021? You may wish to highlight any circumstances where this premium should not apply other than those examples mentioned earlier that are already exempt from Council Tax.

	Comment
L20	<p>how many council houses are empty.</p> <p>There is no reason for properties to be left empty for extended periods.</p> <p>Positive proposals work better than simply "fine". I suppose landlords/owners have no real reason to have property empty.</p> <p>How can you charge for a property that isn't using any services?</p> <p>All the points that I have made in the previous question apply equally to this question. Also, the proposal to charge such inflated premiums</p>

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	<p>is not only morally wrong, but will not work anyway: On one hand, you say that you are trying to encourage property owners to put more homes back into use. On the other hand, you say that you want to raise more money from the owners of empty properties- you are contradicting yourselves! If more properties get put back into use, you will get LESS money as the occupiers will only be paying Council Tax at the standard rate; not at the ridiculously inflated premiums that you are proposing if the properties were to remain empty - it doesn't work both ways!!</p> <p>An excellent proposal. The Council needs to generate revenue in any way possible.</p> <p>We think it would be helpful to consider properties on a case by case basis. It should be used to target those properties which are in poor repair and/or causing issues for neighbouring properties, the local community or the Council. We do not think that these costs should go over 150% for properties like ours which are in good repair & undergoing further renovations as we are doing our very best to carry out improvements as effectively & efficiently as possible.</p> <p>If council tax is paid I can see no justification to double or treble that.</p>
L21	<p>If a property is up for sale they should not have to pay the charges. It is unfair for people who are actively trying to sell their empty property to impose these high charges when they may already be paying a mortgage and council tax on the empty property AND the property they live in.</p> <p>Your proposal would punish people who are already punished and will do nothing to improve the poor housing situation. There are many reasons for houses to be left unoccupied for a length of time and none of these are to benefit the owner. Your proposal, and indeed your current policy, merely compounds the financial hardship. It would be far more effective to offer help to the owners of long term occupied homes to get them ready for sale/rental. Loans and grants should be available. Compulsory purchase could also be an option should the owners keep a property empty for two years or, perhaps, a commandeering of the property to re rented to deserving people with the equivalent of social rent only going to the owners. There are many solutions to the housing shortage and the number of unoccupied homes and none of them involve imposing what amounts to monthly fines</p> <p>I feel that increasing the premium would result in landlords creating fake tenancies in order to avoid making payment.</p>
L22	<p>If someone can afford to leave a property empty for that length of time they're clearly able to afford it, so the charges are an entirely appropriate incentive to correct the commercial priorities.</p>

	<p>Unfortunately, I am unaware of all the reasons that people have for not paying their council tax on an empty property but the existing exclusions should remain.</p> <p>The increase in costs will mean rents for everyone will have to go up.</p>
L23	<p>As a landlord in Sefton I have previously been impacted by the 50% additional charge. I have purchased empty properties which have required full renovations before I could find tenants. As one property had already exceeded the 2years of being empty when I purchased it I was liable for the additional council tax charges. This I felt was unfair. Surely taking a property which is not liveable and has been empty for some time and doing the necessary renovations to provide additional affordable homes in the area is a good thing and should be rewarded and not punished. That said I agree that properties should not be kept empty and a penalty should be in place for those who sit on empty properties. I am aware that this can be a problem in some areas I think a fair addition to the new rules would be to reset the clock on these properties when newly purchased to provide landlords like myself the opportunity and incentive to improve living standards within Sefton.</p> <p>There are a number of unused/ derelict buildings and it would be a positive result if an increased council tax payment forced the owners into letting or selling them, to bring vibrancy to the area. However, those with legitimate reasons for leaving the property empty should not be penalised.</p> <p>I think the 100%charge should be applied after 6 months of being empty. It is inappropriate to leave a property empty while so many people need a home and councils are having financial difficulties.</p> <p>It might make the owner make more of an effort to get the property occupied.</p> <p>It is crucial that people do not continue to have incentives to leave houses empty by the current lower council tax rate, given the numbers of homeless people and others who may be living in cramped conditions. This increase would hopefully be some deterrent.</p> <p>I think you should look at the finances of the owners of these properties. If they live elsewhere it's possible that they can't afford more council tax and by taking them to court you would waste even more money. I don't think it should be a complete ban on the exemption of the 50% tax as it is now. I even think that is too much - isn't the tax for facilities used and if no-one lives there they don't use any facilities!</p> <p>I would suggest the increase should be even larger, say to 200%, to have a greater effect on the situation.</p>

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It is immoral for people to have unused living accommodation while there are so many families without a home.

I feel that a lot of people for good reasons could have a property for 2 or 3 years empty so 50% seems fairer.

Where probate has been granted and the property is for sale

My parents are stuck living next door to an empty property that has been that way in excess of 10 years. Owners refuse to sell yet put solar shades on a roof that is in a bad state of affair? My elderly parents are petrified that squatters will move in and we have no way of contacting these selfish owners. My parents and their neighbours try to keep the front of the house tidy so it isn't obvious what the situation is but are too elderly to continue to keep that up. It is a disgrace the place is left to rot. Hit the owners where it hurts - in their pocket and this will hopefully make them do something about the property.

The government and local authorities are taking a totally simplistic view and failing to understand the complex series of factors that can cause properties to remain empty, including for example, simple lack of market demand, or lack of financial resource on the part of the owner to bring dilapidated properties back from the brink back into use.....even just these two example factors can have a complex inter-relationship, with one interacting on the other. The proper and productive approach to this problem would be to abandon the stick (or at least not make it any bigger) and throw a carrot or two at it.

I understand why the proposal would be implemented for empty properties that could be brought back into use. However, this should not apply to circumstances such as the one that I am in. I am executor to my mother's will - she died in January 2015 and probate was obtained in May 2015, since when the property has been up for sale. It is a one bedroomed retirement shared ownership flat in XX. It went on the market at £65,000 and has been reduced over time to its current asking price of £44,950 and has been on the market with two estate agents. The shared ownership is with a Housing Association and they are difficult to deal with and I have lost one buyer due to their incompetence. In the meantime, not only do I have to pay council tax at an additional 50% rate, but I shall have to pay monthly service charges and a sinking fund charge if ever it is sold. There will be very little money left by the time this all happens. I feel very strongly that I should not be having to pay any council tax, as I receive no services whatsoever, never mind an additional premium. Due to myself spending lots of my time caring for my mother, I managed to keep her out of Sefton's Social Services system, and she never needed any additional support from the Council. Also, the Council itself does nothing to help me sell the flat - sale boards are not allowed outside the listed building. I am unable to bring the flat into use unless it is sold, one of the conditions of the lease is that I am unable to rent it out. I am extremely concerned

	<p>whether there will be sufficient funds if the council tax charge is further increased. In circumstances where an executor to a will is unable to sell or rent a property and can prove that they have done everything possible to sell it, there should be an exemption.</p>
L30	<p>If a property is up for sale, I can't see how you can penalise people who want to sell the property but it is taking longer than they wanted.</p> <p>Property's that are up for sale should be exempt from the increase.</p> <p>We have had the house up for sale for 2 years but can't sell it. Properties that are on the market and empty should be exempt from this.</p> <p>When properties are left empty when owners have gone into care the council should check that they are indeed empty and should take the waived council tax payments from the estate when the property is sold.</p>
L31	<p>I believe the premium should rise the current housing shortage and this increase may persuade private landlords to sell properties that they cannot rent</p>
L37	<p>I think owners should have an opportunity to make a case to the Council to use its discretion to waive the premium where they have been unable to sell or bring their properties back into use due to other circumstances out of their control. The Council should also take the opportunity to provide help and support to owners of long-term empty homes to assist them in bringing these properties back into use. The Council should not waive the premium where owners are marketing their property at an inflated price as this will not help to increase the supply of affordable homes.</p> <p>Without room for discretion this is a very unfair tax to increase to 100%. not all property is just kept empty sometimes there are issues which mean you cannot get a new tenant and therefore are being unfairly penalised.</p> <p>Maybe it will force a few sales and reduce pressure on the precious B Green Belt you seem so keen to destroy</p> <p>Council tax should be paid by all if empty or not</p> <p>Sheer extortion! An ill-considered 'blanket' approach. Appalling because you seem to want to penalise the very people who are trying to do the right thing. Our property is vacant again and we (3 beneficiaries) want to sell the retirement flat and that has been our desire since 2004. It has been marketed for sale continuously, through estate agents. For a period of about 5 years we rented it to a tenant (who has died). The flat is empty again and it is being marketed for sale, yet again. Try as we might we cannot sell the</p>

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	<p>property which is in a block of retirement flats where other flats are regularly up for sale. We are competing with other flat owners (sellers) on the same site. The residents are all elderly so any would-be buyers have to be over 60 thereby creating a 'niche' market.</p> <p>Make it 200% after 2 years</p> <p>Other measures should be put into place to bring the properties back into use, looking at the reasons why the properties remain empty rather than just applying a financial penalty.</p>
PR8	<p>Awaiting planning permission (this process can sometimes be protracted and out of the control of the property owner)</p> <p>If somebody can afford to have an empty house they should be able to afford to contribute to the council tax fund also.</p> <p>There are too many vacant properties in the Borough, I also think if a property has been vacant for 5 years or more, the owners should lose the right to ownership and it automatically transfers to the Council, this if obviously where the owner can't be bothered to deal with any issues with the property</p> <p>Instead of increasing to 100% make it 150 - 200% This will force owners to get tenants or sell. Why does Sefton Council not Compulsory Purchase empty homes to use for homeless?</p> <p>This proposal, and the current 50% premium does NOT incentivise home owners of empty properties to "bring them back into use" as: You are charging more tax, therefore the owner has LESS money to sort their house out and 'bring it back into use'. Therefore, prolonging the period of time that the house will be empty. I believe that if the owner of the property is renovating it BEFORE they live in it or consequently sell the property, they should be exempt as the long-term plan is to "bring the property back into use". To ensure that this is true, council inspectors or a written council policy to state that all work undertaken on the property has to be evidenced and sent to the council.</p> <p>Strongly object as purchased with intent to downsize but having to wait to move as husband became ill and would not be suitable, will move to property on husband's death. Your proposal is just a punishment for anyone trying to plan responsibly.</p> <p>What about an empty property that is up for sale but is not selling? They should not be penalised because of stagnant housing market.</p> <p>I strongly disagree with both these proposals as it is exorbitant. Why should you be penalized unfairly for owning a property that you do not want to rent out because of all the problems that this may entail (watch channel 5) or sell because of the state of the current housing market where we are likely to lose money. The property in question</p>

	<p>was purchase from our pensions and savings for one of our daughter who was going to get a mortgage and repay us. However, she has since married and purchased a property with her husband having taken out a large mortgage. All the costs of the property in question has reverted to us, her parents, who are pensioners and do not want to get into renting. Why should we be penalised further if we pay 100% Council Tax. It certainly will not win you or the government any votes. I'm totally disillusioned with you all so expect that this is just a way of telling us what you intend to do no matter what is said.</p> <p>It would be more equitable if the Council compulsorily purchased such accommodation.</p>
PR9	<p>I would love you to raise it to 100% considering the empty flat I am trying to sell is costing me 150% of the rateable value into the second year of being on the market.</p> <p>Authorities should be allowed to take all necessary steps to bring empty properties back into use. This should include compulsory purchase rather than increased Council Tax where property has been empty for 5 years or more.</p> <p>The whole point of Council Tax is to charge an occupant for using council services. If the property is empty there should actually be a nil charge never mind a 100% charge because there are no costs to the council.</p> <p>I am becoming elderly with an elderly husband and mobility problems and increasingly struggle to manage the only flat I own that is attached to and accessed via my own flat entrance. I have had really bad tenants and am reaching the point of not feeling able to go on renting emotionally and physically. If these council tax changes come into effect I will have to choose between bills I would struggle to pay, continuing to rent regardless of my health or selling the whole property.</p> <p>Great care must be taken to ensure the owner is not vulnerable. Penalties should be in place for any council staff member who fails to exercise due diligence.</p> <p>I have been trying to sell my house for 3 yrs over this period I have reduced the price by 80k in a desperate effort to sell. Some understanding from the council for those actively trying to sell would help enormously. I do agree those empty houses not for sale should have incentives to bring them back into homes. But this blunt instrument without some consideration for those of us already stressed about when will this house stop eating into my pension may just be seen as yet another way of bleed the taxpayer.</p> <p>Empty properties often fall into disrepair and neglect, and are not nice to see.</p>

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	<p>If not exempt and unwilling to sell or rent out, then the premium seems fair. Perhaps consideration should be given for discretion to waive the premium in genuine cases of inability to sell or rent out a property.</p> <p>This is daylight robbery! Sefton council still get paid the council tax whether the building is empty or not? It should in fact be reduced for empty properties as none of the services are being used if the property is empty! Just sheer greed!</p> <p>I think this is an excellent proposal as homes left empty for that long will tend to be neglected damaging the neighbourhood.</p> <p>There is a housing crisis whilst some of the wealthiest people are leaving properties to lay empty and unused, accumulating personal wealth at the expense of the majority. I fully support increasing the council tax levied. The only slight disagreement I have is the suggestion that this is a doubling of the council tax levied. What it is is a removal of a discount in council tax that has previously been applied.</p> <p>Three years would be fairer than two. My property is empty because I cannot sell it at a reasonable price due to Brexit uncertainty. It remains on the market, but I have had few viewings and fewer offers, all well below comparable prices.</p> <p>As mentioned we are very limited to whom we can rent the property to due to the exceptional circumstances related to the "ideal tenant". I think this needs to be looked into in much more detail and not just a blanket increase which suits all as this is not the case. If this did happen then the cost would be passed onto our service users which I do not think is fair.</p> <p>Most responsible landlords do their best to let properties to suitable tenants if a property has been empty as long as ten years it is most likely derelict. Taxpayers are disgruntled at paying 50% Premium Tax. Can't see collection rates rising if Premium Tax is increased excessively.</p>
Outside Sefton	<p>If the home is being advertised for rent, then this should not apply. I have a house that is in very good condition (newly refurbished), but still we are having trouble finding a tenant.</p> <p>Empty retirement flat belonging to my deceased father has been on market for 2 years - have reduced price but still no sale - I am paying maintenance charges and council tax outside my own area out of my savings - whilst I understand basic council tax has to be paid I think it is unfair to expect executors to pay an additional premium when there is nothing more they can do to sell the property.</p> <p>As a landlord if we had an empty property we would still have a mortgage to pay, and I feel it would be unfair to punish us further.</p>

	<p>Fully in agreement if no effort is being made to have the property occupied. However, I have had the property in Sefton on the market for sale ever since my mother passed away in May 2017. The lease does not allow me to let the apartment, and it can only be occupied by someone over 50. To charge 200% of the Council Tax seems totally unfair when I am doing everything I can to sell it . Surely in these circumstances, empty properties should also be exempt.</p> <p>I most certainly agree considering that Sefton is at present charging me 150% rates for an empty flat that I am desperately trying to sell. A 100% rate would be a relief to this pensioner.</p> <p>Depends on the circumstances as to why a property is unoccupied. An increase is unfair to those who intend to live in the property but can't at present due to extensive renovations to make a property habitable (council tax deductions with his regard are currently not sufficient with respect to the period of availability). Therefore, this only extends the period the property is uninhabitable and vacant due to unavailable cash flow to do the work.</p>
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3.3 Summary Table - Questions 1 & 3

	Agree/Agree strongly	Neither agree / disagree	Disagree / Strongly disagree	No response
Question 1	66	7	55	1
Question 3	63	9	56	1

4. Equality Impact Assessment

4.1. Introduction

Any change to function, provision or policy that may have an effect on people is automatically subject of the Equality Act 2010. As such the 'decision makers' have a statutory duty to pay 'due regard' to equality legislation and the potential discriminatory impact that changes have on service users. To inform decision makers, an 'equality analysis report' is submitted to them at the time of decision making for them to consider equality implications as part of their final decision making.

In order to meet equality legislation public bodies have to consider Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to: -

- (a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- (b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

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- (c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and person who do not share it.

4.2 Protected Characteristics

Equality Law (Equality Act 2010) is clear that there are particular characteristic intrinsic to an individual against which it would be easy to discriminate. Section 149 (the Public-Sector Equality Duty) sets the goals of the Act and the characteristics, known as 'protected characteristics' against which we have to test for discrimination. These characteristics are gender, race/ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity and disability.

4.3 Consultation

Sefton Council is considering increasing the Council Tax homes premium from April 2019 on homes left empty and substantially unfurnished for over 2 years. This will help to reduce the number of long term homes and bring them back into use through sale of renting. Any additional income raised from the premium will help support the provision of Council services.

As part of the consultation, equality questions were asked in connection to gender, age, disability and ethnicity.

The main issues that the Council has to consider in relation to the proposed changes to the scheme in relation to equality and diversity are:

- Disabled people, on very low income, who are unable to carry out the necessary renovations to properties themselves or pay someone to do it for them.
- Where owners are struggling to cope with managing the property they own.

4.4 Impacts

The tables below highlight what evidence the Council has on how the proposed changes will affect different groups and communities in relation to equalities and human rights. Where numbers are presented which refer to the survey, this relates to the number of people who responded to the equality questions in the survey, and aligned to the question on impacts. People who responded to the survey and reported any impacts, whether this was a lot of impact or no impact, did so from an individual perspective. The table recognises the responses to the survey but also considers any detrimental impact on the protected characteristic as a whole and includes the mitigations the Council has in place.

Breakdown of respondents by Gender

In terms of the 129 respondents to the eConsult Questionnaire 52 females, 40 males, 2 preferred not to say and 35 not completed returns.

Breakdown of respondents by Age ranges

In terms of the 129 respondents to the eConsult Questionnaire, 94 gave the following age ranges, cross matched against gender.

Age Ranges				
	Female	Male	Not declared	Total
18-29	2	0	0	2
30-39	5	2	1	8
40-49	10	6	0	16
50-59	13	13	1	27
60-69	12	11	1	24
70-79	7	7	1	15
85+	2	0	0	2

Breakdown of respondents by Postcode

In terms of the 129 respondents to the eConsult Questionnaire, the following postcodes were submitted:

Postcode breakdown					
Outside Sefton	L20	L21	L22	L23	L30
10	10	7	4	17	1
L31	L37	L38	PR8	PR9	Not Completed
3	6	2	15	16	38

Breakdown of respondents by Equality Data

Respondents were asked to indicate answers against Equality data questions, the breakdown of which is:

Disability

4 indicated a Hearing Impairment, 5 indicating a Long-Term Illness Affecting Daily Activity, followed by 4 indicating Mental Health/Distress, a further 7 indicating a Physical impairment and 2 with a visual impairment.

Ethnicity/ Religion or Belief

79 of our 129 respondents who answered indicated they were "White British" or "White English" in terms of ethnicity, with fewer numbers for the other classifications.

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Ethnicity - do you identify as...	Total
White British	55
White English	25
White Irish	2
White Polish	1
White Welsh	1
Black British	1
Asian Indian	1
Other White background	2
Other Chinese background	1
Prefer not to say / no response	40

Sexual Orientation

On Sexual Orientation, 78 out of 129 respondents who answered indicated they were Heterosexual, 2 Bisexual and 49 Prefer not to say / or did not respond

Heterosexual	78
Bisexual	2
Prefer not to say / no response	49

Religion / Belief

42 out of 129 who answered indicated they were Christian, 1 Buddhist, 86 no religion / did not respond / prefer not to say.

Gender at birth

85 of the 129 respondents who answered the question indicated that they currently live in the gender given to them at birth. 1 respondent was not in the gender given at birth. 43 prefer not to say / no response.

4.5 Impacts table

Protected Characteristic	
Gender	No inadvertent bias on the basis of gender is indicated. We have not identified any impacts that need mitigation.
Race/Ethnicity	No inadvertent bias on the basis of race/ethnicity is indicated. The proposals do not treat people of different race/ethnicity groups any differently and we have not identified any impacts that need mitigation.
Religion and Belief	No inadvertent bias on the basis of religion or belief. The proposals do not treat persons of different religions or beliefs any differently and we have not identified any impacts that need mitigation.
Sexual Orientation	No inadvertent bias on the basis of sexual orientation is indicated. The proposals do not treat persons of different sexual orientation any differently. We have not identified any impacts that need mitigation.
Age	No inadvertent bias on the basis of age is indicated. Young

	people looking to join the property ladder or rent an affordable property may be affected as more empty properties are made available. We have not identified any impacts that need mitigation.
Gender Reassignment	No inadvertent bias on the basis of gender reassignment age is indicated in the proposals. We have not identified any impacts that need mitigation.
Pregnancy and Maternity	No inadvertent bias on the basis of pregnancy and maternity is indicated. We have not identified any impacts that need mitigation.
Disability	No inadvertent bias on the basis of disability is indicated. However, the consultation results indicate that disability is also relevant to the proposals as people felt that there should be mitigations in place for owners who are unable to manage their affairs or circumstances where disability prompts a need to change property and reduces the ability to carry out the work required to an empty property.

4.6 Mitigations

Key measures in place

- Consideration to be given to whether any additional exemptions under which the Empty Homes Premium should not apply, for example where an owner is living elsewhere to receive care or resident in a nursing home etc.
- Any short term financial hardship or other exceptional circumstances affecting a person's ability to pay will be addressed by the Council's Discretionary Reduction in Liability Policy, and the promotion of that policy, so additional support can be provided for those in exceptional need.
- Sefton Council will continue to maintain its record of providing proactive and tailored support for those Council Tax payers who struggle to make payments and will continue to ensure our recovery procedures identify cases where additional support might be required.
- A proactive approach will be taken to identify persons meeting the severe mental impairment conditions set out in the Council Tax Regulations with a view to exempting them from paying Council Tax.
- The Council will continue working with and supporting customers whose first language is not English.
- Customers affected by the proposals will be contacted directly and provided with clear explanation and offers of advice and support.
- The Council's website information will be updated to reflect the key changes and any issues identified.

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Report to:	Council	Date of Meeting:	23 January 2020
Subject:	Revenue and Capital Budget Update - Treasury Management Position to October 2019		
Report of:	Head of Corporate Resources	Wards Affected:	All Wards
Portfolio:	Cabinet Member - Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services		
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	Yes
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

This report provides Members with a review of the Treasury Management activities undertaken to 31st October 2019. This document is the second report of the ongoing quarterly monitoring provided to Audit & Governance Committee and the mid-year report to Cabinet and Council, whose role it is to carry out scrutiny of treasury management policies and practices.

Recommendation(s):

Members are requested to note the Treasury Management update to 31st October 2019, to review the effects of decisions taken in pursuit of the Treasury Management Strategy and to consider the implications of changes resulting from regulatory, economic and market factors affecting the Council's treasury management activities.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

To ensure that Members are fully appraised of the treasury activity undertaken to 31st October 2019 and to meet the reporting requirements set out in Sefton's Treasury Management Practices and those recommended by the CIPFA code.

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

N/A

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

The financial position on the external investment budget to the end of October indicates a surplus to the end of the period. The forecast to the end of the financial year also shows that investment income will exceed the level set in the budget.

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(B) Capital Costs

None.

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets): External Interest is forecast to exceed the target for the year.
Legal Implications: The Council has a statutory duty to review its Treasury Management activities from time to time during the financial year.
Equality Implications: None.

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: n/a
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: n/a
Commission, broker and provide core services: n/a
Place – leadership and influencer: Support strategic planning and promote innovative, affordable and sustainable capital investment projects through application of the CIPFA Prudential Code.
Drivers of change and reform: The Treasury Management function ensures that cash flow is adequately planned and cash is available when needed by the Council for improvements to the borough through its service provision and the Capital Programme.
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: Pursuit of optimum performance on investments activities and minimising the cost of borrowing and the effective management of the associated risk continues to contribute to a balanced budget for the Council.
Greater income for social investment: n/a
Cleaner Greener: n/a

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Head of Corporate Resources (FD5848/19) and Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD4082/19) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations N/A

Implementation Date for the Decision

With immediate effect.

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

Appendices:

There are no appendices to this report

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1. Background to the Report

- 1.1. As recommended under CIPFA's revised 2017 Code of Practice on Treasury Management in Public Services, the Council's Treasury Management Policy and Strategy document for 2019/20 (approved by Council on 28th February 2019) included a requirement for regular updates to be provided on the investment activity of the Authority. This report is the second of such reports for the year and presents relevant Treasury Management information for the period ending 31st October 2019.
- 1.2. The report includes information on the investments held / entered into during the period and the interest rates obtained (with a comparison of performance against a standard benchmark figure). In addition, the report highlights whether there has been any variance from the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy and the Council's approved Prudential Indicators (the operational boundaries within which the Council aims to work).

2. Investments Held

- 2.1. Investments held at the 31/10/2019 comprise the following:

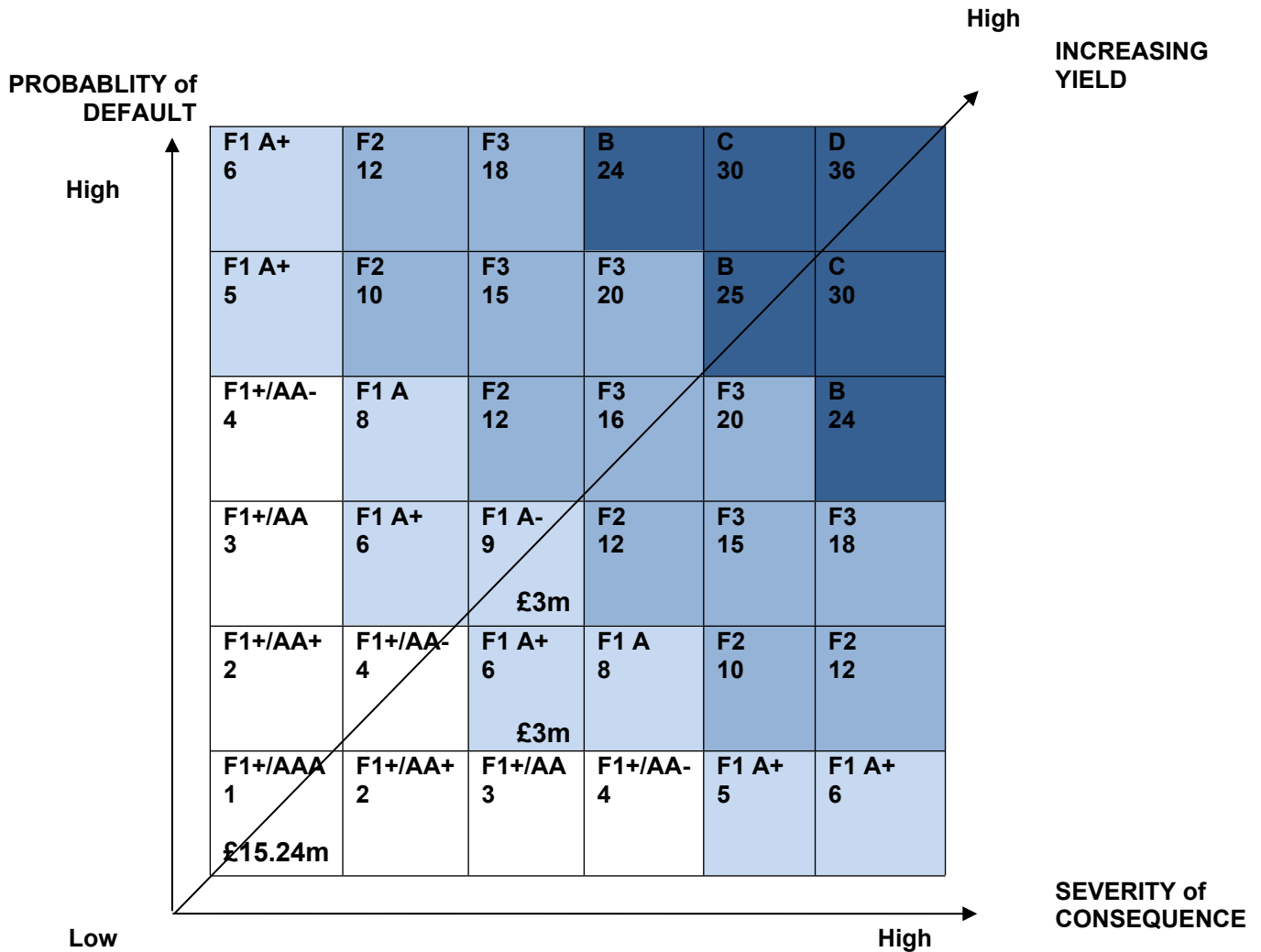
Institution	Deposit £m	Rate %	Maturity	Rating
Money Market Funds:				
Aberdeen	2.44	0.68	n/a	AAA
Aviva	2.62	0.72	n/a	AAA
BNP Paribas	2.59	0.71	n/a	AAA
Goldman Sachs	0.77	0.67	n/a	AAA
Invesco	2.62	0.72	n/a	AAA
Federated Investors	2.10	0.73	n/a	AAA
Insight	2.10	0.72	n/a	AAA
Total	15.24			

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Institution	Deposit £m	Rate %	Maturity	Rating
Fixed Term Deposits:				
Lloyds	3.00	1.05	10/02/2020	A+
Coventry Building Society	3.00	0.92	11/11/2019	A-
Total	6.00			
Property Fund:				
CCLA	5.00	4.24	n/a	n/a
Total	5.00			
TOTAL INVESTMENTS	26.24			

- 2.2. All of the investments made since April 2019 have been with organisations on the current counterparty list. The maximum level of investment permitted in the Treasury Management Strategy in any one institution, or banking group, is currently £25m. Whilst the maximum should be retained, in case economic conditions change, a day to day operational maximum of 10% of the total portfolio is currently being imposed. This will spread the risk of investments for the Council, but will have a small detrimental impact on the returns the Council will receive in the future. The Council has remained within that boundary during the year. At present, it is not expected that there will be any need to review this limit.
- 2.3. The Council will only invest in institutions that hold a minimum Fitch rating of A- for banking institutions, or AAA for money market funds. The ratings applied to investment grade institutions, and the much riskier speculative grade institutions, as defined by Fitch, have been placed into a risk matrix (paragraph 2.6).
- 2.4. An investment has been made with the Church, Charities and Local Authority Investment Fund (CCLA) in June 2014. CCLA invest in commercial property which is rented out to enterprises as retail units, warehousing, and offices. The majority of properties owned are in the south of the country where the market is currently more buoyant than the north. The Council has in effect bought a share of the property portfolio, and returns paid are in the region of 4%. This is a long-term investment with the potential for capital growth of the investment as property prices potentially increase.
- 2.5. The Net Asset Value of the Property Fund has increased from 303.64p per unit to 303.84p per unit over a 12-month period to September 2019, an increase of 0.1% in the value of the Council's investment.

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



SEFTON RISK TOLERANCE

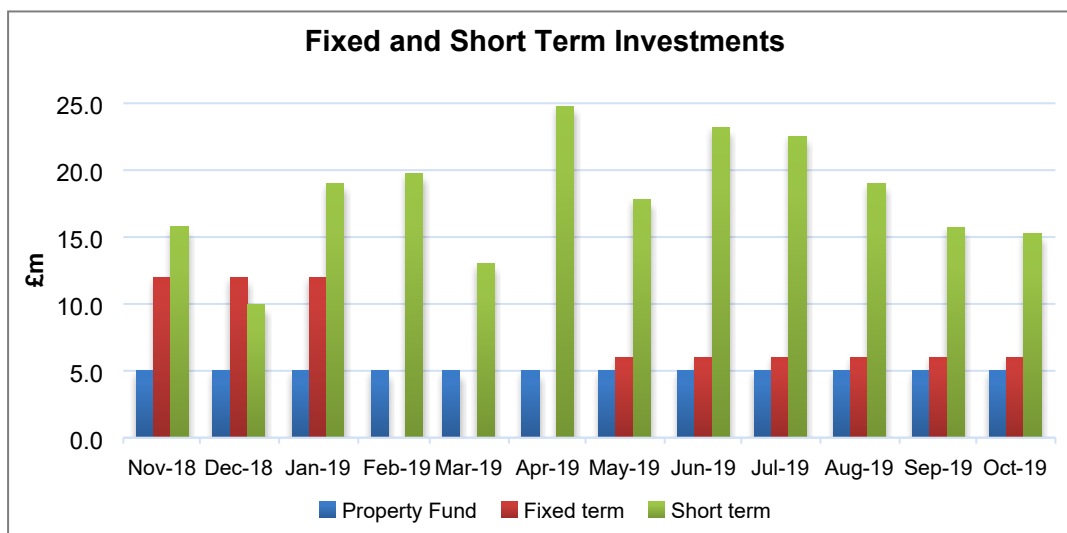
LOW	1 - 4
LOW – MEDIUM	5 - 9
MEDIUM	10 - 20
HIGH	21 - 36

INVESTED

Investment Grade	£15.24m
Investment Grade	£6.00m
Investment Grade	Nil
Speculative Grade	Nil

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- 2.7. The ratio of overnight deposits (short term) to fixed term investments is shown below:



- 2.8. No new fixed term investments have been made since the last quarterly report. One fixed term investment of £3m with Coventry building society is due to mature within the next quarter. Officers from the Treasury Management Team will review the opportunities for reinvesting this amount to take advantage of any favourable rates on offer from approved counterparties.

3. Interest Earned

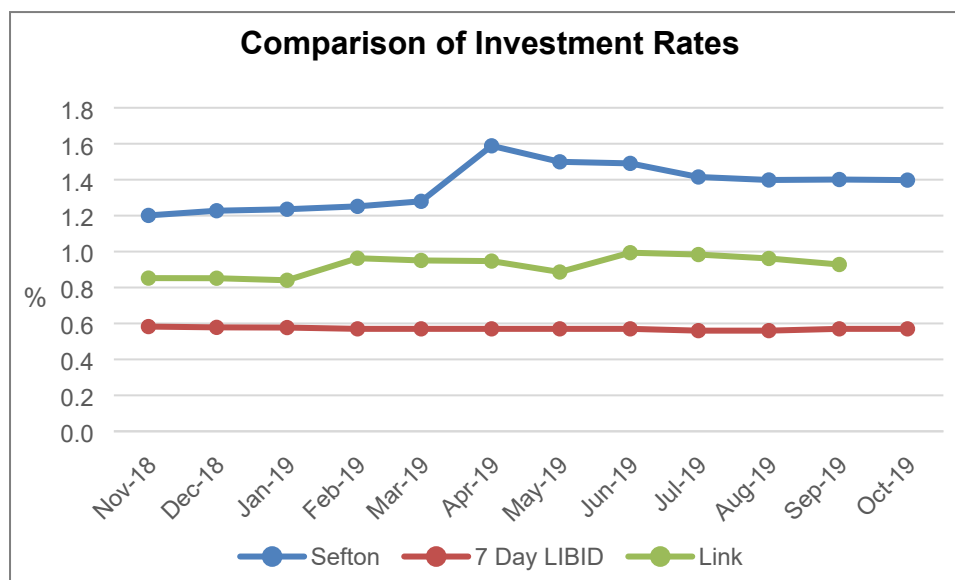
- 3.1. The actual performance of investments against the profiled budget to the end of October 2019 and the forecast performance of investments against total budget at year end is shown below:

	Profiled Budget £m	Actual £m	Variance £m
Oct-19	0.221	0.242	0.021

	Total Budget £m	Forecast Out-turn £m	Variance £m
2019/20	0.415	0.424	0.009

- 3.2. The budgeted investment return for the financial year 2019/20 was set at £0.415m on 1st April 2019. The forecast out-turn shows a minor over-achievement of this target by the end of the financial year. The Council places the majority of its investments with highly liquid Money Market Funds and the yield from these funds has remained relatively unchanged over the first quarter. It is not envisaged that any significant deviation from the budgeted level of income will occur for the remainder of the financial year.

- 3.3. The Council has achieved an average rate of return on its investments that has out-performed the 7 day LIBID and the model portfolio provided by Link:



NB: Link's October position not available at the time of writing.

4. Interest Rate Forecast

- 4.1. Link Asset Services, our Treasury Advisors, have supplied the interest rate forecast and commentary below:

Link Asset Services Interest Rate View										
	Dec-19	Mar-20	Jun-20	Sep-20	Dec-20	Mar-21	Jun-21	Sep-21	Dec-21	Mar-22
Bank Rate View	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.25
3 Month LIBID	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.80	0.90	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.10	1.20
6 Month LIBID	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.90	1.00	1.10	1.10	1.20	1.30	1.40
12 Month LIBID	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.10	1.20	1.30	1.30	1.40	1.50	1.60
5yr PWLB Rate	2.30	2.50	2.60	2.70	2.70	2.80	2.90	3.00	3.00	3.10
10yr PWLB Rate	2.60	2.80	2.90	3.00	3.00	3.10	3.20	3.30	3.30	3.40
25yr PWLB Rate	3.30	3.40	3.50	3.60	3.70	3.70	3.80	3.90	4.00	4.00
50yr PWLB Rate	3.20	3.30	3.40	3.50	3.60	3.60	3.70	3.80	3.90	3.90

It has been little surprise that the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has left the Bank Rate unchanged at 0.75% so far in 2019 due to the ongoing uncertainty over Brexit. In its meeting on 1 August, the MPC became more dovish as it was more concerned about the outlook for both the global and domestic economies. That's shown in the policy statement, based on an assumption that there is an agreed deal on Brexit, where the suggestion that rates would need to rise at a "gradual pace and to a limited extent" is now also conditional on "some recovery in global growth". Brexit uncertainty has had a dampening effect on UK GDP growth in 2019, especially around mid-year. If there were a no deal Brexit, then it is likely that there will be a cut or cuts in Bank Rate to help support economic growth. The September MPC meeting sounded even more concern about world growth and the effect that prolonged Brexit uncertainty is likely to have on growth.

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5. Compliance with Treasury and Prudential Limits

5.1. During the quarter ending 31st October 2019, the Council has operated within the treasury and prudential indicators set out in the Council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement and in compliance with the Council's Treasury Management Practices.

5.2. The key treasury indicators compared to the actuals as at 31st October 2019 are shown below:

External Debt:	2019/20 £m
Authorised limit for external debt	205.000
Operational boundary for external debt	195.000
Actual external debt 31.10.19	152.832

Maturity structure of fixed rate borrowing:	Upper Limit %	Lower Limit %	Actual %
Under 12 months	35	0	2
12 months to 24 months	40	0	1
24 months to 5 years	40	0	28
5 years to 10 years	40	0	12
10 years to 15 years	40	0	21
15 years +	90	25	35

Upper limit for principal sums invested for longer than 365 days:	Limit %	Actual %
Principal sums invested	40	24

6. Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) Rate Rise

- 6.1. Members will be aware that the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) offer a borrowing facility for all local authorities. The PWLB offer this borrowing facility at a fixed rate above the Government's cost of borrowing and this has historically been the most efficient manner of borrowing for councils.
- 6.2. On 9th October 2019, the Government increased this margin by 1% in a response to the substantial increase in PWLB loans taken out by local authorities caused by historically low interest rate levels. At the same time to reflect this demand, the cap on such lending by the PWLB has been increased from £85bn to £95bn.
- 6.3. This change was made with no prior notice and will increase the cost of future borrowing that councils may undertake if the PWLB is chosen.
- 6.4. Members are advised that this change will impact upon future borrowing activity but for Sefton this will have no impact upon the Council's current debt portfolio as all loans held are at fixed rates. The revised borrowing rates will be included in future Treasury Management reports and will be a feature in assessing the cost of future schemes viability and affordability.

7. Treasury Consultant Tender Exercise

- 7.1. Members will be aware that local authorities are required under the Prudential Code to receive appropriate Treasury Management advice in order to inform effective and informed decision making in what is recognised as a complex area of council business.
- 7.2. The Council has procured this advice for some time and has ensured that decisions made by members and officers are supported by specialist expertise to reduce the risk faced by the council.
- 7.3. The current contract is due to come to an end on 31st March 2020, therefore a procurement process will now commence. Due to the size of the contract, under the Council's contract procedure rules this process will be undertaken with the final decision on contract award being made by the Head of Corporate Resources. This will be undertaken in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regulatory Compliance and Corporate Services.
- 7.4. This process will take the form of a restricted Request for Quotation exercise with evaluation being on the basis of the Most Economically Advantageous Tender. The price/quality split of this evaluation will be 30:70 respectively and it is anticipated that the contract award will take place at the end of December 2019 with a view to commencement from 1st April 2020.

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Report to:	Cabinet Council	Date of Meeting:	9 January 2020 23 January 2020
Subject:	Revenue and Capital Budget Update – Additional Capital Estimates		
Report of:	Executive Director and 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:

The Council's Capital Investment Programme has been developed to enable the Council to continue to deliver financial sustainability, to stimulate economic growth and strategic investment. Key to the development of the investment programme is ensuring the best use of existing assets and the generation of council resources to finance upfront capital expenditure.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is asked to approve:

1. The following supplementary capital estimates:

Investment Programme

- Approve Strategic Acquisitions – Land at Bootle, funded by an external contribution of £0.998m from the Combined Authority;
 - Approve Town Centre Commission work funded by an external contribution of £0.750m from the Combined Authority;
 - Recommend to Council the redevelopment of the Cambridge Road Centre funded by an external contribution of £1.145m from the Combined Authority;
 - Recommend to Council the Crosby Lakeside Redevelopment Project to be funded by an external contribution of £3.100m from the Combined Authority (Standalone Report submitted to Cabinet on 7th November 2019);
2. That the Cabinet be requested to commend the report and recommendations to the Council for approval.

Council is asked to approve:

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1. The following supplementary capital estimates:

Investment Programme

- Approve the redevelopment of the Cambridge Road Centre funded by an external contribution of £1.145m from the Combined Authority;
- Approve the Crosby Lakeside Redevelopment Project to be funded by an external contribution of £3.100m from the Combined Authority (Standalone Report submitted to Cabinet on 7th November 2019);

Invest to Save Programme

- Approve the Purchase of the Winter Service Facility funded by £2.632m of prudential borrowing.

Capital Programme Additions

- Approve additions to the Transport Programme of £2.680m funded by capital receipts;
- Approve Essential Maintenance (Victoria Baths) £0.570m funded by capital receipts;
- Approve Essential Maintenance (STCC) £1.244m funded by capital receipts;
- Approve to Council Essential Maintenance (Council wide) £2.834m funded by capital receipts.

2. Approve delegation to the Head of Corporate Resources (Section 151 Officer) and Cabinet Member for Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services any decision to incur short-term borrowing to bridge any funding gap on the basis that the cost of borrowing can be contained within the Growth and Strategic Investment budget and the Council's Prudential Indicators

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

The Investment Programme is an important mechanism within the Council's major change programme – the Framework for Change – through which the aims and objectives contained within the Vision for 2030 and Core Purpose, will be delivered.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)
None

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

Projects that are in the design and feasibility stage of development will attract revenue costs, but all these are all contained within the approved revenue growth budget.

If short-term borrowing is required, whilst assets are in the process of being disposed, the revenue costs will be funded from within the Growth and Strategic Investment revenue budget earmarked for in-year project expenditure.

(B) Capital Costs

The Investment Programme contains £15.954m of expenditure profiled across 2019/20 and 2020/21.

It is to be funded through External Contributions £5.994m, Capital Receipts £7.328m and Prudential Borrowing £2.632m.

Implications of the Proposals:

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

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):
Proposals may have an impact on physical assets and/or ongoing revenue income and expenditure and this will be assessed during the business case approval process.
Legal Implications:
The Council's decision-making processes resulting in the implementation of any capital programme must be transparent.
Equality Implications:
N/A

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

<u>Protect the most vulnerable:</u>
The Investment Programme will enable the Council to continue to seek to protect the most vulnerable within available resources.
<u>Facilitate confident and resilient communities:</u>
The Investment Programme demonstrates a clear commitment to early intervention and prevention and working with partners, communities and local businesses to reduce the reliance on the public sector.
<u>Commission, broker and provide core services:</u>
The Investment Programme recognises that where it is necessary to do so, the Council will continue to be a provider of those core services that the community expects to see delivered but will use new service delivery models and new forms of partnership.
<u>Place – leadership and influencer:</u>

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The Investment Programme will see the Council continue to demonstrate strong and effective leadership building on its proven track record of engagement, consultation, listening and considering feedback in the decision-making process.

The Council continues to work with partners towards common goals, moving away from traditional ways of working focused around delivering services and is demonstrating a greater role in influencing, shaping, enabling and building community capacity.

Drivers of change and reform:

The Investment Programme demonstrates the Council playing a key role in leading and driving change and reform to improve outcomes for Sefton residents and continuously improve the Borough.

Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity:

The Capital Strategy clearly articulates the Council's approach to investing in order to achieve financial sustainability and the ambitions of Sefton 2030.

Greater income for social investment:

The Investment Programme recognises the Council's commitment to developing a commercial nature, looking at what it can do either by itself or with others to generate income and profit that can be reinvested into delivering social purpose.

Cleaner Greener:

The Investment Programme recognises the Council's commitment to work with others to maintain Sefton's natural beauty and ensure that its many assets provide a contribution to Sefton's economy, people's wellbeing and the achievement of the 2030 Vision.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Head of Corporate Resources (FD5867/19) is the author of the report and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD4051/19) has been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

N/A

Contact Officers: Sarah Kemp / Stephan Van Arendsen
Tel: 0151 934 4770/4082
Email: Sarah.Kemp@sefton.gov.uk
Stephan.VanArendsen@sefton.gov.uk

1.0 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The Investment Programme is an important mechanism within the Council's major change programme – the Framework for Change – through which the aims and objectives contained within the Vision for 2030 and Core Purpose, will be delivered.
- 1.2 There are four pillars that underpin the programme and which will help the Council deliver against its stated objectives. These are:
 - Economic Growth – physical regeneration and enabling infrastructure for our economic growth priorities;
 - Public Sector Reform – Service Transformation Projects to address demand management.
 - Service Delivery Options – making efficiencies and savings to ensure a financially sustainable Council in a time of continued financial challenge; and
 - Strategic Investment – supporting investment opportunities the Council may wish to directly sponsor or support in an enabling or commissioning role where there is a sound commercial and financial justification/reason to do so.
- 1.3 One of the fundamental requirements and drivers of the investment programme is the change in the way local government is to be financed in future with a greater emphasis on locally generated income (e.g. Council Tax and Business Rates). The reliance on local income to support the delivery of frontline services means that it is important that the Council, working with its partners, optimises revenue generating opportunities.
- 1.4 The Capital Strategy 2019/20 to 2022/23, which was approved on the 28th February 2019, recognised that economic growth will play an important role in continued financial sustainability, that regeneration is a priority and that where it is appropriate to do so the Council should acquire strategic property for regeneration purposes where business cases provide a satisfactory payback period and profile.
- 1.5 The Capital Strategy provided the framework from which capital expenditure and investment decisions in Sefton are made. It outlines the necessary governance required for the development, management and monitoring of capital investment and the use of capital resources.
- 1.6 The investment programme decision-making process considers stewardship, value for money, prudence, sustainability and (short and long-term) affordability. Each project's suitability and priority is tested by reviewing cost and benefit(s) against the following:

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- An overview of the governance process for prioritisation, approval and monitoring of capital expenditure;
- A longer-term view of capital expenditure plans;
- An overview of asset management planning;
- The authority's approach to commercial activities including due diligence and risk appetite;
- Expectations around debt and use of borrowing to support capital expenditure;
- The knowledge and skills in the authority in relation to capital investment activities.

1.7 This report brings forward the first phase of the Investment Programme following an extensive review against the criteria above and, where necessary, a detailed option appraisal process and the development of robust business cases.

2.0 Additional Capital Estimates (2019/20 and 2020/21)

2.1 This paper presents for approval a number of new schemes which will form the first phase of the Council's Investment Programme; other projects are presented as invest to save schemes; and there are budget additions to the traditional Council capital programme – all of which is summarised in Table 1 below.

2.2 Some of the proposed projects, including those that seek to deliver an ongoing revenue return to the council, are presented separately in standalone reports in order to outline business cases detail and due diligence. Other schemes, which are not commercial in nature and therefore not subject to additional scrutiny of future returns on investment, are explained in further detail in this paper.

2.3 Table 1: Additional Capital Estimates 2019/20 to 2020/21

Programme / Project	Total Capital Estimate £	2019/20 £	2020/21 £	Further Information
Growth and Strategic Investment Programme				
Strategic Acquisitions - Land at Bootle	998,500	998,500		This report
Bootle & Southport Town Centre Commission	750,000		750,000	This report
Cambridge Road Centre	1,145,000		1,145,000	This report
Crosby Lakeside Activity Centre (CLAC)	3,100,000		3,100,000	Standalone report
Total - Growth and Strategic Investment Programme	5,993,500	998,500	4,995,000	
Invest to Save				
Winter Service Facility	2,632,000		2,632,000	Standalone report
Total - Invest to Save	2,632,000	0	2,632,000	

Traditional Capital Programme				
Transport Contributions (10%)	2,680,000	1,240,000	1,440,000	This report
Essential Maintenance - Victoria Baths essential works	570,000	242,000	328,000	This report
Essential Maintenance - STCC essential works	1,244,000	1,008,000	236,000	This report
Essential Maintenance - Council wide programme	2,834,000	112,500	2,721,500	This report
Total - Traditional Capital Programme	7,328,000	2,602,500	4,725,500	

Total	15,953,500	3,601,000	12,352,500	
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Land Acquisitions in Bootle (£0.998m)

- 2.4 Redevelopment of The Strand Shopping Centre and the wider area is a key regeneration and economic development project in the Bootle Town Centre Investment Framework (2016) and links to the Sefton Local Plan. These acquisitions will help to secure vacant possession of land/buildings and is necessary to create a platform so that wider redevelopment can be delivered.
- 2.5 The cost of the acquisitions is £0.998m and is to be funded by Liverpool City Region grant from the Combined Authority Strategic Investment Fund (SIF).

Town Centre Commission (£0.750m)

- 2.6 Following approval by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority for the Town Centre Commission Fund on the 26th July 2019, an indicative allocation of £1m SIF Funding has been made to Sefton Council for Southport and Bootle Town Centres. The grant is earmarked for Southport (£0.500m capital funding) and Bootle (£0.250k capital and £0.250m revenue).
- 2.7 Interventions under the Town Centre Fund will contribute to the sustainability of local communities and improve the environment within which people work and live through:
- I. Enhancing the sustainable vitality of local town and district centres through investment that delivers new employment opportunities and makes those employment opportunities accessible to local residents.
 - II. Place renewal projects, particularly those designed to move away from traditional retail, and broaden the town centre offer and ensure future sustainability.

Cambridge Road Centre (£1.145m)

- 2.8 The project involves a transformational development project to re-develop a well utilised Council owned asset (Cambridge Road Centre), with the objective of providing a fit-for-purpose learning environment, targeting returning learners and facilitating their progression into the labour market in key sectors.

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2.9 The redevelopment will be funded from a Combined Authority grant of £1.145m with an additional leverage match funded from the Council's essential maintenance budget of £0.131m.

2.10 In total, there will be 2,537m² of new build training/learning floor space.

- Estimated 4,650 residents will take up initial learning (after three years);
- 45% of these progressing to further skills development opportunities;
- 35 newly created/safeguarded permanent FTE jobs;
- 6 apprenticeship posts created.

Contribution to the Transport Capital Programme (£1.240m in 2019/20 and £1.440m in 2020/21)

2.11 In order to progress major road infrastructure works the Combined Authority has approved bids from the Council. As part of this the Council is required to identify match funding of £1.24m as a contribution to a number of highway schemes to improve connectivity around the borough, such as A59 Northway Corridor Dover Road Junction. This is to be funded from the Council's resources.

Victoria Baths (£0.570m)

2.12 Urgent repairs are required to the vacant baths complex which are calculated as £0.242m which includes urgent works required to the wall structure of the subterranean vaults.

2.13 A further £0.328m of immediate works is also required in the next 12 months. In the meantime, marketing particulars will be prepared seeking Expressions of Interest for the development and regeneration of the Baths Complex as a whole or part (being the Council's vacant element). There may be additional costs associated with the requirements on the leaseholder and discussions are currently ongoing to understand the legal position on their area of work. The urgent works are predominantly structural works relating to:

- the main facade stonework to the front elevation
- rear elevation walls, including party walls
- rear elevation brick tower
- various roof areas
- subterranean brick vaults at the front of the building, which includes works to the walls and brick piers.

2.14 The above costs are for urgent and immediate works only and in considering the cost of a full programme of restoration, a figure in excess of £6m has been suggested for the whole complex.

Southport Theatre and Convention Centre (STCC) (1.244m)

- 2.15 Management of the STCC asset has recently returned to the council after a long lease with the previous operator came to an end. A new contractor (Bliss) has recently been appointed on a short-term basis to manage the facility whilst a procurement process is undertaken aimed at securing a long-term lease/operator. In the intervening period Bliss are managing day to day operations, along with identified risks. The award of a long-term lease will ensure future sustainability of the theatre and conference functions.
- 2.16 When the previous operator surrendered the property in 2018 a detailed condition survey was undertaken to identify building condition and essential maintenance liabilities. This information was also used to formulate the basis of the temporary agreement with Bliss, whilst at the same time a consultant was commissioned to undertake a dilapidations survey and produce a schedule of repair. This has recently been finalised and the Council is in the process of submitting a formal dilapidations claim.
- 2.17 Following receipt of the associated surveys, Property Services have reviewed all essential maintenance items highlighted through this process and have prioritised these for action. In order to ensure safe operation of the theatre in the interim period, a range of essential works (relating to electrical systems, roof repairs and fire safety matters, at a cost of £0.235m) have been approved for implementation by the Section 151 Officer in conjunction with Cabinet Member, Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services on 12th April 2019 as per the Council's Financial Procedure Rules, under rules for approving supplementary capital estimates. The essential works are to be funded from the forecast income due from the dilapidations claim. Additional works are also required in replacement of the main theatre ceiling, along with more wide-ranging roof repairs, forming part of a longer term and more detailed maintenance plan.
- 2.18 Given the extensive nature of this work there is a requirement to close the theatre for several weeks in order to complete replacement of the ceiling structure along with associated mechanical, electrical and roofing works. It is necessary to agree a programme for this to take place during the quietest period of operation, which is expected to be between January and April 2020. The cost of these further works is estimated to be in the region of £1m and the costs will be met from the essential maintenance budget until such time as the dilapidations claim is resolved. Any residual balance will need to be met from Council resources.

Essential Maintenance Programme (Total five year planned investment of 11.367m – Initial approval for £2.834m)

- 2.19 An assessment has been made of the Council's current approach to the planning and management of building maintenance works in order to ensure that it provides for the most effective utilisation of funding resources. As a result of this it has been identified that a cyclical programme of ongoing maintenance is required.
- 2.20 Therefore, as part of the first phase of the Investment programme it is proposed that a five-year maintenance strategy (circa £12.5m) aimed at arresting the deteriorating condition of the existing portfolio is approved. A detailed

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programme of works for the remainder of 2019/20 and 2020/21 has been developed. The total estimated cost of outstanding works across the corporate property portfolio, as of April 2019 is identified as £30.5 million

- 2.21 In summary, the capital schemes presented in the report need additional capital estimates of £15.954m. Of this £5.994m will be funded via external contributions from the Combined Authority. The remaining funding gap of £9.960m will need to be found from Council resources, namely capital receipts or prudential borrowing.

3.0 Asset Management Strategy

- 3.1 A core part of the Council's Investment Programme is informed by the Asset Management Strategy. The schedule of capital improvement works required to the Council's operational property portfolio is derived from this strategy. The Asset Management Strategy sits alongside the Asset Disposal Policy and overarching Capital Strategy.

- 3.2 The main objectives of capital expenditure on operational assets is to ensure that they continue to be able to meet service requirements in providing services to residents and communities, they meet health and safety standards, are fit for purpose in terms of statutory guidance and legislation, as well as helping the Council to reduce costs from unnecessary revenue expenditure on poorly maintained and/or redundant stock. A key objective of the Capital Strategy is that the Investment Programme links with the Asset Management Strategy to protect current buildings and long-term assets to avoid incurring significant future costs, essentially spending now to save money in the future.

- 3.3 The asset management capital expenditure decision making process must consider the Council's Asset Disposal Policy. Therefore, a review of all Council owned assets, to identify whether assets should be held for operational or heritage purposes, should form part of the Council's future investment and/or capital programme or should be disposed of is underway and the first tranche of recommended disposals, are presented to Members within this report as they inform decision making and funding of phase 1 of the Investment Programme.

- 3.4 There are eight sites recommended for disposal which are presented in the Disposals paper elsewhere on the agenda. These will generate the funding required from Council resources for the schemes presented for inclusion in phase 1 of the Investment Programme.

4.0 Capital Resources (Financing)

- 4.1 Capital Expenditure must be incurred in line with the Financial Procedure Rules. The Head of Corporate Resources (Section 151 Officer) is responsible for ensuring that an Investment Programme which contains new projects funded from Council resources is prepared for consideration by Cabinet before submission to Council for approval as appropriate.

4.2 Capital resources are held corporately and are allocated according to the priorities outlined in section 2. The Council will seek to maximise the use of external grants and contributions and to consider joint funding initiatives with partners if the benefits of doing so align with Council priorities.

4.3 Capital expenditure is typically funded from:

- Government Grants
- Section 106
- External Contributions
- Prudential Borrowing
- Capital Receipts

4.4 The additional capital estimates are shown in Table 1 (paragraph 2.3) and reproduced below alongside a financing plan to fund schemes that require Council resources.

Programme / Project	Total Capital Estimate £	2019/20 £	2020/21 £
Growth and Strategic Investment Programme			
Strategic Acquisitions - Land at Bootle	998,500	998,500	
Bootle & Southport Town Centre Commission	750,000		750,000
Cambridge Road Centre	1,145,000		1,145,000
Crosby Lakeside Activity Centre (CLAC)	3,100,000		3,100,000
Total - Growth and Strategic Investment Programme	5,993,500	998,500	4,995,000
Invest to Save			
Winter Service Facility	2,632,000		2,632,000
Total - Invest to Save	2,632,000	0	2,632,000
Traditional Capital Programme			
Transport Contributions (10%)	2,680,000	1,240,000	1,440,000
Essential Maintenance - Victoria Baths essential works	570,000	242,000	328,000
Essential Maintenance - STCC essential works	1,244,000	1,008,000	236,000
Essential Maintenance - Council wide programme	2,834,000	112,500	2,721,500
Total - Traditional Capital Programme	7,328,000	2,602,500	4,725,500
Total	15,953,500	3,601,000	12,352,500

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Financed by:			
External Grants / Contributions	5,993,500	1,748,500	4,245,000
Capital Receipts	7,328,000	2,602,500	4,725,500
Prudential Borrowing	2,632,000	0	2,632,000
Total	15,953,500	4,351,000	11,602,500

- 4.5 A separate report is included on this agenda which provides members with detail of the proposed asset disposal process to be undertaken from the first stage of the asset review.
- 4.6 The disposals will provide sufficient funding for the Council to finance the Investment Programme schemes presented in this paper without a requirement to borrow, other than for the purchase of the Winter Service Facility for which the borrowing costs are funded from overall savings within the business case for the scheme.
- 4.7 However, if there is a delay in the generation of receipts or the profile of capital expenditure changes and there is a need to incur some short term borrowing then this will be delegated to the Head of Corporate Resources (Section 151 Officer) on the basis that the cost of borrowing can be contained within the Growth and Strategic Investment budget and the Council's Prudential Indicators.

SEFTON LABOUR GROUP

NOTICE OF MOTION

TO BE PUT TO THE COUNCIL MEETING ON 23 JANUARY 2020

Moved by: Councillor Brennan

Seconded by: TBC

Byng House

This Council calls on the Royal British Legion to reconsider its decision to close Byng House in Southport and to retain its home maintenance service.

This Council acknowledges the tremendous work that the Royal British Legion does on behalf of veterans past and present but expresses its concern that the closure will have a detrimental effect on the wellbeing of members of the Sefton veterans community.

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COUNCIL MOTION

23 JANUARY 2020

PROPOSED BY: COUNCILLOR SIR RON WATSON

SECONDED BY: COUNCILLOR TONY BROUGH

ADULT SOCIAL CARE

Sefton Council recognises the commitment made by the new Conservative Government to give priority to dealing with the critically important issues of Adult Social Care

Council believes that because of its experience in this area it should produce a definitive policy document for formal submission to the Government as part of what will be a National Consultation exercise.

The Council recognises and welcomes the Governments stated objective to approach this issue on an all party basis and believes that Sefton should do the same

The Council should therefore set up a working party whose composition should represent all the parties on the Council who reach the normal threshold of members to give detailed consideration to the issue and that their findings should be submitted to the full Council for approval and not just to the Cabinet.

The working party should be focused and comprise of 4 Labour, 2 Lib Dems and 1 Conservative member. The names to be agreed by the Whips of the parties concerned

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COUNCIL MOTION

23 JANUARY 2020

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Pugh

SECONDED BY: Councillor TBC

BURSCOUGH CURVES

This Council

(1) notes the intention of the incoming Conservative government to establish a £500 million Beeching Reversal Funds

(2) recognises the potential economic benefits that could follow from the restoration of the Burscough Curves -particularly to Southport

(3) urges the City Region Authority to prioritise the scheme in conjunction with neighbouring authorities in order to draw down available government funding

(4) will notify the Department of Transport, neighbouring MPs and Network Rail of its support for the restoration of rail links at Buscough that will bind Liverpool City Region, Preston City Region and East Lancashire more closely together and invite their response.

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