

Overview & Scrutiny



SEFTON COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

Sefton Council 



Overview & Scrutiny

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Overview and Scrutiny Management Board



Councillor John Sayers
*Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board
2020/21*

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board for 2020/21.

Communication has always been a key consideration for the Management Board and the Board has previously agreed that Cabinet Member reports would be submitted to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee in order to contribute towards the relationship between the Executive and Overview and Scrutiny Members.

Members have welcomed the Cabinet Member update reports and attendance of relevant Cabinet Members at Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings; and this process will remain in place during 2021/22.

The Management Board met three times during 2020/21 and considered the following issues:

- Draft Executive/Scrutiny Protocol
- Centre for Public Scrutiny - Results of Annual Survey
- Centre for Public Scrutiny - Document on Climate Change
- North West Employers' Network Events
- Update on Working Groups
- Preparations for Municipal Year 2021/22

More detailed information about some of the issues considered can be found below.

Draft Executive/Scrutiny Protocol

The Management Board responded to a request from the Cabinet to develop an Executive/Scrutiny protocol for use in Sefton.

The Management Board was happy to undertake this task as the Annual Survey of the Centre for Public Scrutiny found that the presence of an Executive/Scrutiny protocol made a difference to the quality of the scrutiny/executive relationship; and it

was also considered that the protocol could be utilised as a training tool, particularly for new Members.

An [Executive/Scrutiny Protocol](#) was subsequently developed and was approved by the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Cabinet.

Centre for Public Scrutiny

The Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS), now known as the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny is a national centre of expertise on governance and scrutiny. The Management Board considered a number of matters as detailed below:

- **Results of Annual Survey**

The [Annual Survey](#) 2019 produced by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) was formulated on the basis of 437 survey responses from within 242 different councils. Key findings related to the topics of Resourcing, Impact and Influence and Councillors and Politics. Details of how Sefton fared in respect of the findings are as follows:

- Impact and Influence - the Annual Survey found that the quality of the scrutiny/executive relationship – and the presence of an executive/scrutiny protocol – made a difference to effectiveness. As referred to above Sefton has approved an Executive/Scrutiny Protocol
- Councillors and Politics - the Annual Survey found that the position on gender parity (chairing and gender) had actually fallen since this question was last raised – 65% of those in chair and vice-chair positions were men. This was not the case in Sefton where gender parity was higher than average
- Resourcing - the Annual Survey found that the average number of full-time equivalent (FTE) officer resource available for scrutiny in 2019/20 was 1.29. In Sefton there were 2 FTE officers dedicated to scrutiny, higher than average

- **Document on Climate Change**

The Management Board considered a document produced by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) entitled [“10 questions to ask if you are scrutinising climate change”](#). The Management Board took cognisance of the questions and requested that the Member Reference Group for Climate Change take account of the 10 questions posed as part of their work on climate change; and agreed that a copy of the document be circulated to all Overview and Scrutiny Committee members for information.

North West Employers’ Network Events

The Management Board was kept abreast of business conducted at North West Employers’ Network Events and updates were provided on the following matters;

- Strategic Scrutiny in Practice Network meetings
- Councillor Development Network
- Development of the Councillor Induction Programme



Email addresses of the Management Board Members have been shared with the North West Employers' organisation so that they can be invited to digital events.

Update on Working Groups

The Management Board received updates at each meeting on the current position of on-going Working Groups established by the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees. Details of Working Groups can be found in the individual Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Reports contained within this document.

Preparations for Municipal Year 2021/22

The Management Board kept an overview of the preparations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees for the Municipal Year 2021/22; particularly the production of Work Programmes and the operation of Working Groups as referred to above. Overview and Scrutiny Committees will hold physical meetings in 2021/22 in accordance with Government advice.

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee (LCRCA O&S)

The Management Board received updates on LCRCA O&S. During 2020/21 Sefton's representatives on the LCRCA O&S were Councillors Dowd, Howard and Waterfield. Councillor Dowd was Sefton's Scrutiny Link. One elected Member from both the Liverpool City Region Liberal Democrat Group and the Liverpool City Region Conservative Group also served on LCRCA O&S and Councillors Pugh and Sir Ron Watson took up these respective roles.

Overview and Scrutiny Training Event

A training event for Overview and Scrutiny Members, "Scrutiny Essentials and Questioning Skills" was held on 27 May 2021 and attended by 15 Members. The event was facilitated by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny and presented by Lisa Smart, an elected Member of Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council. The Powerpoint presentation made at the training event can be viewed [here](#) A copy of the presentation has been circulated to all Overview and Scrutiny Members and Substitute Members.

The Year Ahead

Given the scale of the financial and service challenges facing the Council, together with the Council having to contend with the impact of the on-going Covid-19 pandemic, the year ahead will be extremely busy for the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Management Board. A key role of Members will be to scrutinise such challenges, including how they impact on the Council's statutory requirement to remain financially sustainable, provide a wide range of services and the desire to deliver Sefton's 2030 Vision and Core Purpose.



I look forward to receiving further updates on the work of the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny, including the full results of the 2020 Annual Survey.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Officers of the Democratic Services Team for all their hard work during the year; and to thank the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees for their on-going input into the work of the Management Board.

Councillor John Sayers
July 2021



During 2020/21 the following Members served on the Committees indicated-

Overview & Scrutiny Management Board

Councillor John Sayers (Chair)
Councillor Roscoe (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Blackburne
Councillor Bradshaw
Councillor Byrom
Councillor Carragher
Councillor Doyle
Councillor Murphy

Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Adult Social Care and Health)

Chair: Cllr. Doyle
Vice-Chair: Cllr. Roscoe
Cllr. Carr
Cllr. Cluskey
Cllr. Howard
Cllr. Irving
Cllr. Jones
Cllr. Myers
Cllr. Pugh
Cllr. Waterfield

Mr. B. Clark, Healthwatch Representatives
Mr. R Hutchings, Healthwatch Representatives



Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding)

Chair: Cllr. Murphy
Vice-Chair: Cllr. Carragher
Cllr. Bennett
Cllr. Evans
Cllr. Keith
Cllr. Pitt
Cllr. Yvonne Sayers
Cllr. Spencer (Subsequently replaced by Councillor Cluskey)
Cllr. Thomas
Cllr. Webster

Mr. M. Byrne, Healthwatch Representative
Ms. K. Christie, Healthwatch Representative
Mrs. S. Cain, Advisory Member
Mr. S. Harrison, Church Diocesan Representative
Father D. Seddon, Church Archdiocesan Representative
Ms. M. McDermott, Parent Governor Representative
Ms. C. McDonough, Parent Governor Representative

Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)

Cllr. John Sayers (Chair)
Cllr. Janis Blackburne (Vice-Chair)
Cllr. Tony Brough
Cllr. Liz Dowd
Cllr. Sean Halsall
Cllr. Killen
Cllr. Daniel Lewis
Cllr. Greg Myers
Cllr. Dave Robinson
Cllr. Yaso Sathiy



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

Cllr. Susan Bradshaw (Chair)
Cllr. Leslie Byrom C.B.E. (Vice-Chair)
Cllr. Iain Brodie - Browne
Cllr. Tony Brough
Cllr. Mhairi Doyle, M.B.E.
Cllr. Janet Grace
Cllr. Nina Killen
Cllr. Daniel Lewis
Cllr. Bob McCann
Cllr. Patrick McKinley



Adult Social Care and Health



Councillor Mhairi Doyle, MBE
Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee
(Adult Social Care and Health)

It is my pleasure to introduce the 2020/21 Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Adult Social Care and Health).

Introduction

This is my second Annual Report as Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Adult Social Care and Health). 2020/21 has been a difficult year for all of us as we had to respond to the pandemic and restrictions and move away from traditional physical meetings towards remote meetings.

Despite the big changes that virtual meetings brought, I believe that the Committee has built on the existing good working relationships we have with many of our health partners. The trust that has been established has meant that we are recognised in our role of “critical friend”; we are listened to and have been able to have a positive influence on the development of health and adult social care services within Sefton. This Report is presented to the Council and a wider audience beyond in the hope that the information it contains will contribute to the debate and discussion about the provision of health and adult social care services for Sefton residents and their development, improvement and access.

The Committee met formally on four occasions during 2020/21. An informal meeting of Members of the Committee also took place in order to receive information on the NHS 111 First service. Details of these events are outlined below.

NHS Trust Quality Accounts

Generally, the Committee commences the Municipal Year with the consideration of draft Quality Accounts from local healthcare providers. This provides Committee Members with an opportunity to comment on the performance of local NHS Trusts during the preceding twelve months, particularly in relation to patient experience, safety and clinical effectiveness. A number of local NHS Trusts routinely submit their draft Quality Accounts for consideration and comment each year and it is always a challenge to determine where the Committee will focus each year. Usually, an informal meeting of Members of the Committee takes place early in the Municipal



Year dedicated to considering the draft Quality Accounts from invited NHS Providers. This year we did things a little differently and Members of the Committee were invited to attend a Quality Accounts Day during October, organised by the Sefton Clinical Commissioning Groups, and we were able to comment on any issues raised by NHS Trusts. In time I hope that we will be able to return to inviting representatives of NHS Trusts to attend physical meetings.

Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs)

Throughout 2020/21 the Committee received regular update reports from the two Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) within Sefton, namely the South Sefton Clinical Commissioning Group and the Southport and Formby Clinical Commissioning Group.

The CCGs are, of course, responsible for the planning and commissioning of health care services for the local area. During 2020/21 they reported to the Committee on a range of activities designed to promote health and wellbeing amongst residents. I believe that excellent relationships exist between Committee Members and officers of the CCGs, particularly the Chief Officer who attends virtually every Committee meeting and has always been willing to take up issues raised by Members and explain aspects of the services provided.

Updates submitted by the CCGs have included details of the following:

- Covid-19 and the phase 3 response
- Winter preparedness
- Annual flu vaccination campaign
- Community services in Southport and Formby
- Talking therapies in Sefton
- GP out of hours service
- Primary care networks
- Successful funding bid for Mental Health Support Teams in Sefton
- Governing Body meetings
- Changing commissioning landscape
- Covid-19 vaccination programme
- Sefton's GP led service
- Sefton vaccination volunteering programme
- National vaccination booking service
- NHS reforms to better integrated care
- Shaping Care Together Programme
- NHS 111 First

The regular updates allow Members to raise questions and scrutinise aspects of the services provided by the CCGs.

We also received separate reports from the CCGs on the following matters:

- Potential Merger of Clinical Commissioning Groups in North Merseyside

- Reconfiguration of Spinal Surgery Services in Cheshire and Merseyside

Throughout the year the Sefton CCGs have also submitted statistics to the Committee on Health Provider Performance which has enabled us to scrutinise the key performance areas of our local NHS Hospital Trusts, including the Friends and Family Test and A&E monitoring for both Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust and Aintree University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust. These statistics have been particularly useful in scrutinising services during winter pressures.

I am grateful to Fiona Taylor, Chief Officer for both the Sefton Clinical Commissioning Groups, and her staff, for their input into the work of the Committee and their attendance at Committee meetings.

NHS Trusts / Partners

Throughout 2020/21 the Committee has received reports and presentations on work and activities undertaken by certain NHS organisations. Attendance at meetings by senior NHS representatives have included the following:

- Integrated Care Teams – the Deputy Director of Integration, Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust, contributed towards a presentation given by the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Health.
- Low Secure Unit New Build Project – Maghull Health Park – the Consultant Clinical Psychologist, Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust, presented on proposals.

This attendance has enabled Committee Members to scrutinise NHS performance in the areas concerned.

Joint O&S Meeting with Children’s Services

In February 2021, the Chief Executive of Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust, attended a joint meeting we held with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children’s Services and Safeguarding), to brief Members on the the Shaping Care Together Programme, a programme of work designed to improve hospital services. A listening (engagement) exercise had been launched in January 2021 to gather the views of patients, staff, the public and stakeholders about what currently worked well at Southport and Ormskirk hospitals, as well as in primary and community healthcare services. The Joint Committee requested the submission of information on feedback received, together with a review of the engagement exercise undertaken, prior to any options being considered. I expect we will hear more about the Shaping Care Together Programme during 2021/22.

Adult Social Care

During the year, the Committee received reports on the following aspects of the Council’s Adult Social Care function:

- Integrated Care Teams



- Winter Plan
- Adult Social Care Vision
- Care Homes in Sefton
- Integrated Commissioning Update

Due to the pandemic, Adult Social Care has faced a range of challenges throughout the year, not least within our Care Homes, and I am grateful to Deborah Butcher and her Teams, for their input and their attendance at Committee meetings. I hope the Committee will be able to continue to focus more on Adult Social Care in the forthcoming year and I look forward to receiving Deborah's reports in the future.

Public Health

Public Health has become an extremely important function throughout the past year and during 2020/21 the Committee received reports on the following aspects of the Council's Public Health function:

- Covid Response
- Sefton Covid-19 Outbreak Management Plan
- Public Health Annual Service Plan

I am very grateful to Margaret Jones, Director of Public Health, and her Team for keeping the Committee informed of Public Health developments during the year, particularly in relation to the Council's response to the pandemic and on-going developments.

Other Items

During the year we received a report from the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer on "Centre for Public Scrutiny - 10 Questions to ask if you are Scrutinising Climate Change". This was very timely as we also had a presentation from the Section Manager Energy and Environmental Management, Corporate Resources, on Climate Change and the Council's response to the climate emergency on the same agenda, so the report provided Members with valuable questions to pose.

The Committee also received reports from the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer on the draft Executive/Scrutiny Protocol, and I am certain the Protocol will improve the quality of relationships between Cabinet and Scrutiny Members; clarify respective roles; and contribute towards more effective scrutiny in Sefton. The Protocol can also be utilised as a training tool in Sefton, particularly for newly-elected Members.

Informal Meeting of Committee Members

During October 2020, an informal meeting of Members of the Committee took place in order to receive a briefing and information on the NHS 111 First service. This was delivered by our CCG colleagues. As a result of the briefing, it was agreed that further information would be provided in relation to training programmes and the recruitment process for call handlers.

Scrutiny Review Working Group

During 2020/21 the Committee established a Mental Health Issues Working Group, comprised of Councillors Roscoe. Howard and one of Healthwatch co-opted members. This topic arose mainly out of concern for the mental health of individuals as a result of on-going lockdowns and restrictions, in response to the pandemic. We were also conscious that many of the services offered to people with mental health issues were forced to change in the way they were delivered during the last year. I look forward to hearing about the outcome of the review during the next Municipal Year, together with any recommendations that may be made.

Site Visits

Normally, Committee Members are occasionally provided with opportunities to visit NHS Trust premises to view the provision of services and such visits allow us to ask questions and make observations. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to conduct any site visits during 2020/21 and I hope that Committee Members will be able to resume physical visits in the not too distant future.

Pre-Scrutiny and the Key Decision Forward Plan

As ever, the Key Decision Forward Plan provided the Committee with an opportunity to pre-scrutinise Key Decision items from the Council's Forward Plans, as each of the latest Forward Plans are submitted to the Committee as part of its Work Programme update. The pre-scrutiny process assists the Cabinet and Cabinet Members to make effective decisions by allowing Overview and Scrutiny Committees to examine issues beforehand and make recommendations prior to a determination being made by the Executive.

Cabinet Member Reports

The regular attendance at Committee meetings of both Councillor Paul Cummins, Cabinet Member - Health and Social Care, and Councillor Ian Moncur, Cabinet Member – Health and Wellbeing, has been very much appreciated by Members of the Committee. Throughout the year all the relevant Cabinet Member Update Reports have been included on agendas and I feel that it is particularly important to include regular updates on major areas of the Council's activities, particularly as budgets have become increasingly under pressure. The Cabinet Member Update Reports have included a wealth of valuable information on aspects of the services and the Cabinet Members' attendance, together with the presence of senior officers from both the Council's Adult Social Care and Public Health service areas, has been very useful, providing Members with an opportunity to raise question and scrutinise developments within those Council Portfolio areas. I hope that opportunities to scrutinise those areas will continue into the next Municipal Year.

Sefton Healthwatch

Back in 2014/15 the Committee was fortunate in securing the services of two Advisory Members from Healthwatch Sefton who bring additional experience and expertise to the table, and this good practice has continued into 2020/21.

Myself and my Vice-Chair have met informally with the Healthwatch representatives on a regular basis, together with the Manager of the Organisation, and these informal meetings have proved to be very useful, enabling us to discuss a wide range of issues and strengthen the excellent working relationship between Healthwatch Sefton and the Committee. We have also been able to use these informal meetings to exchange information.

I am very grateful to both our Healthwatch co-opted Members for their valuable input into the work of the Committee and their attendance at Committee meetings.

Contributions Made During 2020/21

The attendance of representatives of organisations and partners, including senior officers of NHS Trusts, has been much appreciated and I would like to thank all our partners for their openness and their responses to our requests and suggestions. I have also appreciated the advice and support of Fiona Taylor, Chief Officer for both the Sefton Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs); Deborah Butcher, the Council's Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Health; and Margaret Jones, Director of Public Health, during 2020/21.

I am grateful to all the Members of the Committee for their support and for the enthusiastic way that they have contributed to our work. I would specifically like to thank my Vice-Chair during 2020/21, Councillor Diane Roscoe, for her help and assistance with the work of the Committee. During the year she has been invaluable with her eye for detail and her ability to spot potential risks and issues. Diane has also attended informal meetings with Healthwatch representatives, and this has assisted in strengthening the excellent working relationship between Healthwatch Sefton and the Committee.

My particular appreciation goes to our Democratic Services Officers for their commitment, advice and support. Without them the work of Overview and Scrutiny could not take place. Specific thanks must go to the officer who supports the Committee, Debbie Campbell, Senior Democratic Services Officer, for her hard work, dedication and patience.

The Year Ahead

Looking ahead to 2021/22, there may be potential for some Health Scrutiny work in the following areas:

- Review of Hyper-Acute Stroke Services;
- Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust – Shaping Care Programme
- Merger of CCGs across the Cheshire and Merseyside



With on-going pressures on social care and health services at a time when public expectations remain high, I am aware that the Committee faces fresh challenges at the beginning of each new Municipal Year and this year could see exceptional challenges. Despite these challenges, I am confident that the Committee will rise to meet the expectations on it and that Members will be kept fully informed and continue to play an active role on the Committee. The coronavirus has dominated available resources and it may be some considerable time before services are anywhere near fully recovered and able to function as something approaching “normal”.

Councillor Mhairi Doyle
July 2021



Children's Services and Safeguarding



Councillor Paula Murphy
*Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
(Children's Services and Safeguarding)*

I am pleased to introduce Sefton Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding) Annual Report 2020/21 to the Council.

Introduction

2020/21 has been a difficult year for all of us as we had to respond to the pandemic and restrictions and move away from traditional physical meetings towards remote meetings, despite some of the challenges remote meetings brought.

During 2020/21 the Committee met formally on four occasions. We also met informally for a children's workshop. Details of the meetings and the items considered are below.

Covid-19 Response

We began our remote meetings with a presentation on the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Committee received a presentation from Vicky Buchanan, Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education, on the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Ms. Buchanan provided information on the following in relation to the Council's response and activity:

- Following the announcement of lockdown on 23 March 2020 the Council agreed a set of principles to support the most vulnerable; to work alongside partner agencies and businesses; communicate with communities; and to planning for recovery;
- Governance arrangements at the start of the pandemic;
- Immediate Council response;
- Sefton Covid-19 statistics;
- Support for residents and communities and the Council's workforce;
- Economic impacts and the starting point for recovery;
- Core objectives for recovery planning;



- Strategic approach to recovery; and
- Recovery planning progress update.

Ms. Buchanan concluded by indicating that the unprecedented worldwide pandemic created a most complex set of circumstances; that the Council workforce was a credit and that the Council was able to operate a significant number of services and for staff to work agile during this time; that partnership working was very strong and enhanced relationships were established with all partners including schools; that the Council was in a strong position going forward in terms of recovery but needed to ensure it received financial backing; and that tragically, significant numbers of local people had died and families suffered loss.

Laura Knights, Head of Children's Care, updated the Committee on activity and response in relation to Children's Social Care, indicating that the service had continued to support children and families; that virtual visits, some doorstep visits and the resumption of face-to-face visits since July 2020 had taken place; and that close work with schools had taken place, with increased demand since schools had resumed.

Tricia Davies, Interim Head of Education, updated the Committee on activity and response in relation to Education, indicating that weekly meetings had taken place throughout the pandemic with a wide range of officers from the Council, plus health partners; that risk assessments of schools had taken place; that school attendance had been high at the commencement of the Autumn term; that close partnership working took place with input from Public Health and the Department for Education health-line; and that a blended learning approach was being adopted.

The Committee agreed that the presentation be noted, and Ms. Buchanan be thanked for her informative presentation.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Continuous Improvement Plan Updates

Improvements had been required following the Ofsted and Care Quality Commission joint local area SEND revisit during April 2019, and this remained an area of concern. Throughout 2020/21 we received regular updates on progress made regarding the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Continuous Improvement Plan and updating on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on developments.

It is anticipated that we will see improvements to the SEND service in the months ahead.

Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI)

In relation to the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) of the Multi-Agency Response to Children's Mental Health, representatives of the key partner agencies involved had attended a meeting during 2019/20 to present the findings of the JTAI and outline the actions required. In addition to officers representing Children's Social Care and Communities from the Council, representatives of NHS South Sefton Clinical

Commissioning Group (CCG) and NHS Southport and Formby CCG and Merseyside Police also attended.

During 2020/21, progress of the JTAI was reported to the Committee and a summary is below.

Progress of the Joint Targeted Area Inspection Action Plan

During September 2019, Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), HMI Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, (HMICFRS) and HMI Probation (HMIP), had carried out a joint inspection of the multi -agency response to abuse and neglect in Sefton. This inspection had included a “deep dive” focus on the response to children’s mental health. In January 2020, the Committee had received the published letter and a presentation from the partnership in response to the inspection. The written Statement of Action was produced and submitted to Ofsted in March 2020, and on in April 2020, correspondence was received stating that, Ofsted, the CQC, HMICFRS and HMIP had reviewed the action plan and agreed that it demonstrated an accurate understanding of the areas of priority action and findings of the joint inspection team. During 2020/21 the Committee received updates on the progress of the delivery of the Joint Targeted Area Inspection Action Plan.

Regular updates will continue to be presented to the Committee in the months ahead.

Reports/Presentations from the Sefton Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs)

The Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) are made up of local doctors, nurses, practice staff and lay members who are well placed to know the health needs and views of people living in the area. The CCGs are responsible for planning and buying, or “commissioning”, the majority of local health services that local residents may need.

From time to time representatives of the CCGs attend the Committee in order to update on services commissioned by the CCGs and to respond to questions put by Members of the Committee. A summary of the items concerned is below.

Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Across Sefton - Update Report

During November 2020, the Committee considered a report from the Children and Young People Commissioning Manager, NHS South Sefton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and NHS Southport and Formby CCG. The report provided an update on CCG commissioned provision of Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), focussing on the response and performance of Sefton’s mental health services, specifically in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic and the challenges this presented. The report also highlighted new services and initiatives which were contributing to improvements in the mental health offer for the children and young people of Sefton, together with developments.

The Committee noted the update report and the Chief Officer of the Sefton Clinical Commissioning Groups was requested to provide information on any additional

funding available for services to the Senior Democratic Services Officer, for circulation to Members of the Committee.

Performance Reports for Key Children's Services

In March 2021, the Committee considered Integrated Performance Reports for Key Children's Services, submitted by NHS South Sefton Clinical Commissioning Group and NHS Southport and Formby Clinical Commissioning Group. The Integrated Performance Reports set out information on:

- Alder Hey Children's Mental Health Services;
- Improve Access to Children & Young People's Mental Health Services (CYPMH);
- Waiting times for Routine/Urgent Referrals to Children and Young People's Eating Disorder Services;
- Children and Young People new Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) referrals within 12 and 30 weeks;
- Children and Young People new Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) referrals within 12 and 30 weeks;
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS);
- % Referral to Choice within 6 weeks;
- % Referral to Partnership within 18 weeks;
- Children's Community (Alder Hey);
- Paediatric Speech and Language Therapies (SALT);
- Paediatric Dietetics;
- Paediatric Occupational Therapy (OT); and
- Paediatric Children's Continence Promotion Service.

Fiona Taylor, Chief Officer for NHS South Sefton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and NHS Southport and Formby CCG; and Martin McDowell, Deputy Chief Officer, NHS South Sefton CCG and NHS Southport and Formby CCG; attended the meeting to present the Integrated Performance Reports and to respond to questions/issues raised by Members of the Committee. Fiona Taylor indicated that representatives of Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust could be requested to provide an overview of services when the matter was next considered.

Members of the Committee asked questions/raised issues on the following:

- How services and staff were commissioned, as some indicators appeared to vary. Representatives of Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust could be requested to provide an overview on the flexibility of services and staff at a future meeting.
- Any differentiations in diagnosis between boys and girls for ASD and ADHD. Would girls go undiagnosed? What age range were children diagnosed? Information would be sought from Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust.
- Reasons for the delay in the start of assessment of some children and young people for new Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) referrals within 12 and 30 weeks and actions being taken to rectify.



The Committee agreed that

- (1) the Integrated Performance Reports be noted;
- (2) the Chief Officer for NHS South Sefton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and NHS Southport and Formby CCG be requested to:
 - (a) seek information from Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust on any differentiations in diagnosis between boys and girls for Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), including the age range of children diagnosed and the risk of girls being undiagnosed, the information to be provided to the Senior Democratic Services Officer, for circulation to Members of the Committee; and
 - (b) consider inviting representatives of Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust to provide an overview on the flexibility of services and staff at a future meeting.

Review of Health Services for Children Looked After & Safeguarding in Sefton - Update on Actions Being Undertaken

In March 2021, the Committee considered a joint presentation by NHS South Sefton Clinical Commissioning Group and NHS Sefton and Formby Clinical Commissioning Group, providing an update on actions being undertaken since the Care Quality Commission (CQC) Review of Looked After Children and Safeguarding in Sefton. The presentation set out the following:

- Context;
- Process;
- Update;
- Lessons Learned; and
- Evidence of Impact.

Fiona Taylor, Chief Officer for NHS South Sefton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and NHS Southport and Formby CCG; and Helen Case, Designated Nurse, for NHS South Sefton CCG and NHS Southport and Formby CCG, attended the meeting to present the update and to report on the progress of actions.

Members of the Committee asked questions/raised issues on the following:

- The Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) referred to within the presentation was the same as the JTAI referred to under Minute No. 37 below.
- The good progress made regarding health assessments was welcomed, particularly as certain practices were now considered to be good practice.
- The tracking and sampling technique adopted to follow the experiences of children where there had been safeguarding concerns or who were looked after.



- The good progress made by the team following the review was acknowledged, despite the number of children coming into care and the pressures due to the pandemic.

The Committee agreed that the joint presentation be noted.

I am grateful to Fiona Taylor, the Chief Officer for NHS South Sefton CCG) and NHS Southport and Formby CCG, and her staff for their contributions towards the work of the Committee and their willingness to attend meetings to respond to questions put by Members.

Reports/Presentations on Children’s Social Care

The Council’s Children’s Services aims to provide services to promote and safeguard the welfare of children.

During 2020/21 the Committee received and considered reports on the following aspects of Children’s Social Care:

Children and Young People’s Plan Progress Update.

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Children’s Social Care and Education presenting the final version of the Children and Young People’s Plan, 2020 – 2025.

The final draft of the Plan was received at the meeting in November 2019 and the Plan went on to gain Cabinet approval in January 2020 and was adopted as the Children and Young People’s Plan for Sefton with effect from 1 March 2020. The report presented a Delivery Plan to accompany the document and to support the communication of the Plan’s key priorities. The report also provided an overview of a recent review of the “Heard” priority of the Plan at the Children’s Partnership Board. The report set out information on the Delivery Plan; communication of priorities; and the “Heard” priority in that children and young people would always be central to decisions made about them and their journeys would be shaped by their voice.

Copies of the final published version of the Children and Young People’s Plan; the Delivery Plan; and an example of a Children’s Service Dashboard were attached to the report.

The Committee agreed to:

- (1) note the contents of the report and
- (2) the Integrated Social Care and Health Manager was requested to investigate whether Covid-19 has affected the data contained within the Dashboard attached to the report and provide the results to the Senior Democratic Services Officer for circulation to Members of the Committee. In the event that the data is accurate, consideration be given to holding an informal workshop session to explain the detail to Members of the Committee.



Children’s Social Care Annual Report 2019/2020

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Children’s Social Care and Education setting out a summary of the progress in relation to the Children’s Social Care Improvement Plan and activity for the year end 2019/2020.

The Improvement Plan had identified three key objectives, as follows:

1. Ensure frontline practice is consistently good, effective and focused on timely, measurable outcomes for children.
2. To improve management oversight at all levels to ensure effective services for children and young people receive good quality supervision.
3. Ensure that frontline services are sufficiently resourced and the workforce appropriately skilled to enable high quality work to be undertaken with children and young people.

The Committee agreed that the report be noted and bi-annual reports in relation to the progress of the Children’s Social Care Continuous Improvement Plan be continued to be received by the Committee.

Children and Young People’s Plan Data Dashboard In-depth Narrative

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Children’s Social Care and Education presenting an update on the data relating to the Children and Young People’s Plan four priorities that were presented at the previous meeting. The latest Children and Young People’s Plan dashboard was attached to the report.

An informal workshop session had taken place previously to explain the data in detail to Members of the Committee.

The Committee agreed that

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) a further update be received by the Committee on the progress of the plan in six months’ time; and
- (3) the Director of Public Health be requested to provide information on the National Child Measurement Programme and whether any monitoring with local foodbanks took place, to include information on support offered to schools through Active Sefton, etc., and the information to be provided to the Senior Democratic Services Officer, for circulation to Members of the Committee.

Sefton Local Safeguarding Children Board Report on Serious Case Review Activity

The Committee considered the report of the Sefton Local Safeguarding Children Board Independent Chair providing an overview of Series Case Review activity.

The Sefton Local Safeguarding Children Board Independent Chair was in attendance to present the report and respond to issues raised by Members.

The Committee agreed that

- (1) the Sefton Local Safeguarding Children Board be requested to provide its Annual Report to the Committee in future; and
- (2) the Sefton Local Safeguarding Children Board Independent Chair be thanked for her attendance.

Fostering Service Annual Report

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education that provided a summary of the fostering service; highlighting practice; and plans to build on current achievements for the period 2019/2020.

The Fostering Service provided a range of short-term and permanent placements for Looked After Children with foster carers who had a diverse range of skills and experience. Foster carers provided respite support to each other, support to birth parents and carers, emergency care, and care for children in preparation for adoption and long-term permanence. Many young people had chosen to Stay Put with foster carers and carers had been able to support them beyond 18, through to independence and into adulthood.

As of 31 March 2020, Sefton Fostering Service had 89 approved mainstream fostering households caring for 159 children and 62 connected carer households caring for 67 children. The remainder of the children in care were placed with Independent Fostering Agencies, residential units, residential schools, Staying Put placements, Supported Lodgings or in semi-independent accommodation and children placed for adoption.

The Sefton Fostering Service Annual Report 2019/20 was attached to the report.

The Committee agreed that:

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) annual reports in relation to the progress of the Children's Social Care Fostering Service be continued to be received by the Committee; and
- (3) the Head of Children's Care be requested to provide figures on the number of people with disabilities who are foster carers to the Senior Democratic Services Officer, for circulation to Members of the Committee.

High Needs Funding Update

Further to Minute No. 30 (6) of 26 January 2021, and to Minute No. 89 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 4 February 2021, the Committee considered the report of the Head of Education Excellence in relation to the financial position of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) High Needs Block Budget; actions to address ongoing in-year pressures; and longer-term sufficiency plans to meet increasing demand for specialist places, to improve processes and governance and balance the budget.

Members of the Committee asked questions/raised issues on the following:

- The relationship of the local authority with schools, in relation to grants and budgets.
- The possibility of additional funding from the Department for Education (DfE), given the pressures of the pandemic.
- How the High Needs Block Budget was determined for each local authority.
- The demand pressures facing education, particularly in relation to the pandemic.
- Views on proposed initial changes to the High Needs National Funding Formula were currently being sought from the DfE and the link would be provided.
- Post-16 provision in relation to young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) and how best to promote the current strategy and approach.

The Committee agreed that:

- (1) the report be noted; and
- (2) the Head of Education Excellence be requested to provide the link to the Department for Education public consultation on proposed initial changes to the High Needs National Funding Formula to the Senior Democratic Services Officer, for circulation to Members of the Committee.

Bi-Annual Report and Review of Children’s Social Care Improvement Plan

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Children’s Social Care and Education, summarising the progress in relation to the Children’s Social Care Improvement Plan for the last six months.

The Improvement Plan had identified five key objectives, as follows:

1. Assessment, planning and review
2. Achieving early permanence
3. Continuous practice development and a stable workforce
4. Ensuring good quality management oversight and supervision
5. Quality Assurance/Performance Framework- delivering improvement.

The Children and Young People’s Scorecard was attached to the report.

Members of the Committee asked questions/raised issues on the following:

- Clarification on the frequency of reporting the matter to the Committee.
- Good quality supervision remained an ongoing concern.
- Recruitment of social workers remained an on-going concern.
- Clarification regarding referrals and re-referral rates to Children's Social Care.
- Caseloads held by social workers remained an ongoing concern.

The Committee agreed that

- (1) the contents of the report be noted; and
- (2) bi- annual reports in relation to the progress of the Children's Social Care Continuous Improvement Plan be continued to be received by the Committee.

Emotional Health and Wellbeing Strategy

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education presenting the new Sefton Children and Young People's Emotional Wellbeing Strategy 2021-2026. The final draft of the Strategy was attached to the report. The report outlined recent activity and the approach taken to refresh the content of the Sefton Emotional Health and Wellbeing Strategy, together with the next steps to be taken.

Members of the Committee asked questions/raised issues on the following:

- Had the Wellbeing Toolkit been rolled out to schools and colleges and had any feedback been received? An overview could be provided to the next Committee meeting. Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust also had a good news item to report.
- The former Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Working Group had advocated emotional support in schools.
- The age range the Strategy was directed to, together with the organisations that would support the Strategy.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted; and
- (2) the Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education be requested to consider presenting an overview of the Wellbeing Toolkit rolled out to schools and colleges, together with any feedback received, to a future meeting of the Committee.

Corporate Parenting Board Annual Activities Report 2020

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education providing an overview of the activities of the Sefton Corporate Parenting Board 2020. The overview related to all Board activities completed between January 2020 and December 2020. The Corporate Parenting Board – Annual Activities Report 2020 was attached to the report.

In line with local and national guidance and restrictions, in relation to COVID 19, meetings of the Sefton Corporate Parenting Board had been facilitated via Microsoft Teams. Virtual attendance at meetings had not been affected by this.

Members of the Committee asked questions/raised issues on the following:

- The positive contribution of the work of the Sefton Corporate Parenting Board and acknowledgement of organisations and individuals concerned, particularly the Making a Difference Group.
- An annual survey of all children in care took place.

The Committee agreed that the report be noted.

I would like to place on record my appreciation of the contribution made by Vicky Buchanan, Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education, and her Children's Social Care Teams towards the work of the Committee.

I am also grateful to Laura Knights and her Team for their contribution towards the work of the Committee.

Reports on Schools

The Education Excellence service within the Council provides a range of statutory and support services for schools to ensure pupils have the best opportunity to achieve.

Details of reports submitted by the Interim Head of Education are set out below.

Covid Management in Schools

In January 2021, the Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education outlining the safeguarding arrangements for vulnerable children who did not attend school during the first Covid-19 lockdown, between March to June 2020. The report also referenced information relating to the wider re-opening of schools following this period. The report indicated that the Covid Act 2020 had removed statutory enforcement of school attendance.

The Committee agreed that:

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) the Director of Public Health be requested to provide information on whether numbers of primary children currently attending school were too high given the risks associated with Covid-19, to the Senior Democratic Services Officer, for circulation to Members of the Committee; and
- (3) the Head of Communities be requested to provide information on the BBC donation scheme of unwanted IT equipment to schools, to the Senior Democratic Services Officer, for circulation to Members of the Committee.



I am grateful to Tricia Davies, Interim Head of Education, and her Team for their contribution towards the work of the Committee.

Working Groups

During 2020/21, that Committee established a Working Group to consider Persistent Pupil Absence in schools. Membership was comprised of Councillors Bennet, Carragher and former Councillor Keith. Mrs. Sandra Cain, the Associate co-opted member on the Committee, also took part. The Final Report of the Working Group was presented to the Committee in January 2021 and the outcome is set out below.

Persistent Pupil Absence Working Group Final Report

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer presenting formally the final report of the Persistent Pupil Absence Working Group. The Final Report of the Working Group was attached to the report.

Councillor Carragher, the Lead Member of the Working Group, introduced the report.

The Committee recommended the Cabinet and Council to support and approve the following recommendations:

1. That the good practice regarding school attendance currently undertaken by the Council and schools, as outlined in the findings of the Final Report, be acknowledged and noted;
2. That the Interim Head of Education be requested to explore the possibility of:
 - (a) a campaign to tackle school attendance across all key stages with a specific emphasis on the early years and foundation stage, the campaign to focus on conveying clear messages about how absence affects attainment, wellbeing and wider outcomes;
 - (b) delivering of clear messages about expectations, routines and consequences to new pupils and families through prospectus and admission/transition events;
 - (c) ensuring that the attendance of vulnerable children is monitored across the early years stage;
 - (d) an aspiration for a post of a dedicated worker for children who are supported by Education, Health and Care Plans, in order to address any barriers for children and young people attending school; this aspiration could be considered in the future as part of the on-going work on school attendance;
 - (e) attendance being part of the enhanced transition and not just for children and young people on the Special Educational Needs and disability



(SEND) register, as this will address the early identification of any school attendance issues;

- (f) sanctions for non-attendance being applied consistently across primary and secondary schools;
 - (g) schools providing an adult mentor to those children who have contact with the school Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) but who are not on the SEND register, with whom the children can have regular access and build up a relationship;
 - (h) encouraging schools to provide training in SEND and Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) conditions to all teaching staff, to include office staff;
 - (i) extending buddy schemes with older peers to all schools, pupils to be “matched up” to ensure they have something in common;
 - (j) Improving communication between primary and secondary schools at transition stage, to ensure children are “understood” by teaching staff in secondary schools and that any good practice is shared; and
3. That the Senior Democratic Services Officer be requested to liaise with relevant officers in order to ensure that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children’s Services and Safeguarding) receives a six-monthly monitoring report, setting out progress made against each of the recommendations outlined above.

The link to the Final Report is here: [Sefton Council](#)

Secondary School Performance and Attainment Working Group

Towards the end of 2020/21, the Committee established a Working Group to consider Secondary School Performance and Attainment. Membership was comprised of Councillors Carragher, Keith and Murphy. The Working Group agreed that the review would take place in two stages. The first stage would focus on historical performance and attainment. The second stage would focus on current performance and attainment and would commence in September 2022. Unfortunately, Councillor Carragher is unable to continue serving on the Working Group as she has been appointed as Mayor of the Council. Former Councillor Keith lost her seat at the Local Elections in May 2021.

I hope that other Members of the Committee will volunteer to take part in this important piece of work.

Reports/Presentations from Corporate Resources

Centre for Public Scrutiny - 10 Questions to ask if you are Scrutinising Climate Change



The Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer providing information contained within a document produced by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) entitled “10 questions to ask if you are scrutinising climate change”. The report set out the contents of the document, together with the 10 questions posed, indicating that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board had requested the CfPS document to be circulated to all Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members for information.

The Committee agreed that the Centre for Public Scrutiny document entitled “10 questions to ask if you are scrutinising climate change”, be noted.

Climate Emergency Progress Report

The Committee received a presentation from Stephanie Jukes, the Section Manager Energy and Environmental Management, Corporate Resources; and Julia Thorpe, Project Officer – Climate and Environment, reporting on Climate Emergency progress by the Council. The presentation outlined the following:

- Purpose of the presentation
- Background – Climate Emergency
- Carbon footprint for Sefton
- Strategy and Implementation Plan
- Implementation Plan - Phase 1
- Covid-19
- Green Recovery
- How will progress be monitored?
- Communications Plan
- Climate Assembly UK
- Summary and next steps
- Contact details

Members of the Committee asked questions/raised matters on the following issues:

- The projected timescale to achieve carbon-neutral status.
- The cost of alternative transport.
- Progress with the Sefton Clean Air Zone and heavy goods vehicles accessing the docks. An update could be obtained and forwarded to Members of the Committee.

RESOLVED: The Committee agreed that the presentation be noted and thanked the officers concerned for their informative presentation.

Draft Executive/Scrutiny Protocol

In November 2020 and following a request for a draft Executive/Scrutiny Protocol to the meeting of the Cabinet in July, the Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer presenting a draft Executive/Scrutiny Protocol to the Committee for consideration and comment. The development of an Executive/Scrutiny Protocol aimed to improve the quality of relationships between Cabinet and Scrutiny

Members; clarify respective roles; and contribute towards more effective scrutiny in Sefton. The draft Protocol was attached to the report.

The Committee agreed that the draft Executive/Scrutiny Protocol, as attached to the report, be endorsed and submitted to the Cabinet for approval, in due course.

Executive/Scrutiny Protocol

In January 2021, the Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer advising of the Cabinet decision to approve the Executive/Scrutiny Protocol for use in Sefton.

The Executive/Scrutiny Protocol was attached to the report at Appendix A.

The Committee agreed that the decision of the Cabinet in approving the Executive/Scrutiny Protocol for use in Sefton be noted and welcomed.

Parent Governor Representative

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer indicating that the term of office for one of the current Parent Governor Representatives on the Committee was due to expire in November 2020. The report sought to formally agree extending the term of office of the Parent Governor Representative concerned.

The Committee agreed that the term of office for the Parent Governor Representative concerned be extended for a period of no more than two years, up to November 2022.

Informal Meeting re: Children's Workshop

Following on from consideration of the Children and Young People's Plan Progress Update, the Integrated Social Care and Health Manager was requested to investigate whether Covid-19 has affected the data contained within the Dashboard attached to the report and provide the results to the Senior Democratic Services Officer for circulation to Members of the Committee. In the event that the data was accurate, consideration would be given to holding an informal workshop session to explain the detail to Members of the Committee.

An informal workshop session did take place and I am grateful to officers for organising this and explaining the data to Members.

Cabinet Member Reports

In order to keep Overview and Scrutiny Members informed, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board had previously agreed for relevant Cabinet Member Reports for the Children, Schools and Safeguarding Portfolio to be submitted to the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee. During 2020/21, the Cabinet Member Update Reports have been included on Committee agendas for general information purposes for Members of the Committee.

Items considered within Cabinet Member reports have included issues relating to:

- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND);
- Commissioning;
- Response to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Emotional Health and Wellbeing Strategy;
- Capital Funding to Support Children in Sefton; and
- Announcement of Ofsted Focused Visit.

Councillor John Joseph Kelly, the Cabinet Member – Children, Schools and Families, attended meetings of the Committee during 2020/21 to present his Update Report, and I would like to place on record my thanks to the Cabinet Member for his regular update reports to our Committee, which have greatly assisted the Committee in keeping abreast of issues within the Children, Schools and Safeguarding Portfolio. The update reports are much appreciated by all the Committee Members. I am also grateful to him for his on-going support and commitment towards the Scrutiny function.

Pre-Scrutiny and the Key Decision Forward Plan

The Key Decision Forward Plan provides the Committee with an opportunity to pre-scrutinise Key Decision items from the Council's Forward Plan, as the latest Forward Plan is submitted to the Committee as part of its Work Programme update. The pre-scrutiny process assists the Cabinet and Cabinet Members in making effective decisions as it allows Overview and Scrutiny Committees to examine issues and make recommendations prior to the executive decision being made.

I am pleased that Committee Members were presented with an on-going opportunity to pre-scrutinise Key Decisions relating to the Children, Schools and Families Portfolio.

Front-Line Visits by Elected Members

During 2020/21, opportunities for a wider range of Members to engage with Children's Social Care, to enhance their understanding of front-line delivery, had to cease and I hope that front-line visits will re-commence in the future.

Co-Opted Members

The Committee has the following representatives as part of its membership:

- 1 Church of England diocese representative;
- 1 Roman Catholic archdiocese representative;
- 2 parent governor representatives;
- 2 advisory members from Healthwatch Sefton; and
- 1 independent advisory member.

All our co-opted members regularly attend the Committee to contribute towards debates and bring additional experience and expertise to the table. I would like to thank all our Added Members for their attendance and contributions during 2020/21, as it is very much appreciated.

Coronavirus and the Response to COVID-19

The last few months have been disruptive for children and their education and I hope that school attendance will be able to resume and flourish in the year ahead, presenting our children with opportunities to resume their education and to thrive.

Thanks and Acknowledgements

I am particularly appreciative of our Democratic Services Officers for their commitment, advice and support. Our responsible officer is Debbie Campbell, Senior Democratic Services Officer, and I am grateful for the contributions she has made during 2020/21 towards the smooth running of the Committee.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all Committee Members, officers and partners for their support, hard work and contributions to our endeavours throughout the year, particularly Laura Knights, Head of Children's Care, and Tricia Davis, Interim Head of Education.

Special thanks must go to Vicky Buchanan, former Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education, and I'm sure the committee look forward to working with her successor, Lisa Lyons, in the future.

The Year Ahead – 2021/22

The Committee will be examining a number of key areas during 2021/22 in order to ensure that the services we provide are continually improved to benefit all who live and work in the Borough, particularly children and young people and I know that the Committee will look forward to the new Municipal Year as it works as a "critical friend" to our Cabinet Member and partners.

I am conscious that the response to COVID-19 has dominated the way services are provided to children and we may need to take this into account in prioritising items during the new Municipal Year.

Councillor Paula Murphy
July 2021



Regeneration and Skills



Councillor John Sayers
Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
(Regeneration and Skills)

It gives me great pleasure to introduce Sefton Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills) Annual Report 2020/21.

During the year the Committee has met five times and considered matters relating to:

- Climate Emergency Progress Report – Presentation
- Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Annual Report to Overview and Scrutiny
- Green Sefton Annual Report 2020
- Green Sefton - Income and Growth Update - Presentation
- Winter Maintenance Policy & Operational Plan
- Centre for Public Scrutiny - 10 Questions to ask if you are Scrutinising Climate Change
- Draft Executive/Scrutiny Protocol
- Digital Inclusion Working Group – Update on Recommendations
- Sefton Vehicle Crossings Policy
- Digital Strategy – Presentations
- Sefton Economic Strategy Update

A special meeting of the Committee was also convened to consider a decision of Cabinet, in relation to the Procurement of 120 litre Blue Wheeled Bins for Glass Recycling, that had been called-in.

Cabinet Member Reports

In keeping with previous years and in order to keep Members informed, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board agreed for relevant Cabinet Member Reports to be submitted to appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The Committee therefore received regular Cabinet Member update reports; and I would like to take the opportunity to thank Councillor Hardy, Cabinet Member – Communities and Housing, Councillor Moncur, Cabinet Member Health and Wellbeing (Green Sefton element), Councillor Veidman, Cabinet Member – Planning and Building Control,



Councillor Fairclough, Cabinet Member – Locality Services and Councillor Atkinson, Cabinet Member – Regeneration and Skills for their regular and informative update reports.

Work Programme 2020/21, Scrutiny Review Topics and Key Decision Forward Plan

At each meeting the Committee considered the reports of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer that sought views of the Work Programme for 2020/21, the identification of potential topics for scrutiny reviews to be undertaken by a Working Group(s) appointed by the Committee; the identification of any items for pre-scrutiny by the Committee from the Key Decision Forward Plan; and provided an update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The pre-scrutiny process referred to above can assist the Cabinet to make effective decisions by giving the Overview and Scrutiny Committee the opportunity to examine issues beforehand and making recommendations prior to a determination being made.

All agendas and minutes of the Committee can be accessed [here](#)

Covid-19 Pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic had, and continues to do so, a major impact on Sefton's communities, businesses and workforce. This was acknowledged in a presentation made to the September 2020 meeting of the Committee in which Sefton's response and activity to the pandemic was set out. Information was provided on:

- Following the announcement of lockdown on 23 March 2020 the Council agreed a set of principles to support the most vulnerable; to work alongside partner agencies and businesses; communicate with communities; and to planning for recovery
- Governance arrangements at the start of the pandemic
- Immediate Council response
- Sefton Covid-19 statistics
- Support for residents and communities and the Council's workforce
- Economic impacts and the starting point for recovery
- Core objectives for recovery planning
- Strategic approach to recovery
- Recovery planning progress update

In conclusion it was noted that the unprecedented worldwide pandemic created a most complex set of circumstances; that the Council workforce was a credit and that the Council was able to operate a significant number of services and for staff to work agile during this time; that partnership working was very strong and enhanced relationships were established with all partners including Schools; that the Council was in a strong position going forward in terms of recovery but needed to ensure it

received financial backing; and that tragically significant numbers of local people had died and families suffered loss.

The Committee was appreciative of Council staff for their response to the pandemic and their performance of different work roles and ways of working; mentioned the transfer of staff to support clinically vulnerable residents and how these resources could be maintained when services returned to normal; and considered that a major objective would be to provide support and recovery planning with minimal disruption to Council services. The Committee raised concerns about the national crisis in the Covid-19 testing programme due to laboratory testing capacity and the effects this had on Sefton's communities.

Working Groups

The Committee currently has two Working Groups in operation and details are set out below.

Effectiveness of the Council's Enforcement Activity Working Group

I am the Lead Member of the Working Group and am joined on it by Councillors Dowd and Roche. To date, the Working Group has met on six occasions and considered information relating to:

- enforcement activity undertaken within service areas across the Council
- legal enforcement powers available to the Council
- promotional campaigns with fast-food outlets
- costs to clear fly-tipped waste
- NSL civil enforcement contract

Following consideration of all the information the Working Group agreed that its scoping document be narrowed and that the focus should concentrate on cleansing aspects of littering and fly-tipping/rear entry problems; and interviews have been undertaken with witnesses from NSL to obtain their views of and hear of their experiences undertaking enforcement action in the borough.

The Working Group has agreed to:

- Investigate options to address the scale and visibility of enforcement resources and the need to focus on environmental issues such as littering and fly-tipping; and
- Look at best practice in other local authorities as to how they operate their civil enforcement contracts including alternative approaches whereby the contractor was only paid based on performance and outcome

Housing Support Services to Vulnerable People

Councillors Blackburne, Murphy, Robinson (Lead Member) and Anne Thompson are members of the Working Group. To date, the Working Group has met on five occasions and considered information relating to:

- the scale and location in Sefton of supported accommodation for the cohorts of vulnerable people within the scope of this review
- details of the Serco contract specification with the home Office;
- profiles of service users in relation to age, gender, children;
- support services commissioned by the Council and the accommodation related to those services; and the associated support service specifications
- a report on Serco Postcode Checks

The Working Group has also interviewed witnesses from the Home Office, Serco, Migrant Help, Venus Charity, a former Asylum Seeker, a Syrian Refugee, the Bosco Society and service users and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority.

The Year Ahead

The Committee will continue to make progress on the following priorities over the coming year:

- Flood & Coastal Risk – Annual Report
- Review of Winter Service and Operational Plan
- Update on Operational Activities delivered via Locality Services
- Procurement of 120 litre Blue Wheeled Bins for Glass Recycling – Update on progress
- Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority – Service Delivery Plan 2020/21
- Sefton Economic Strategy for Growth
- Update on the progression of the Liverpool City Region Digital Inclusion Strategy
- Leasehold House Sales
- Green Sefton 2020/21 Annual Report, Service Vision 2030, and Service Plan 2020/21
- Update on recommendations of the Housing Licensing Performance Framework, Digital Inclusion and Post-16 SEND Provision Working Groups
- Approval of the Final Reports for submission to Council of the Housing Support Services to Vulnerable People and the Effectiveness of the Council's Enforcement Activity Working Groups
- Identification of further topics to be the subject of Working Group reviews

Given the scale of the financial and service challenges facing the Council, together with the Council having to contend with the impact of the on-going Covid-19 pandemic, the year ahead will be extremely busy for both Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Management Board to scrutinise such challenges, including how they impact on the Council's statutory requirement to remain financially sustainable and the desire to deliver the Sefton's 2030 Vision and Core Purpose.

Finally, and on behalf of the Committee, I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to our work over the past year. I would personally like to thank all Members of the Committee, Cabinet Members Councillors Atkinson, Fairclough, Hardy, Moncur and Veidman and the officers Stuart Barnes, Andy Cutts, Paul Fraser, Gary Jordan, Stephanie Jukes, Peter Moore, Mark Shaw, Helen Spreadbury,

Julia Thorpe, Stephen Watson and Andrea Watts who have attended meetings for their support to me over the past year and provided the Committee with valuable information.

Councillor John Sayers
July 2021



Regulatory, Compliance, and Corporate Services



Councillor Sue Bradshaw
Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
(Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services)

On behalf of the Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services) it gives me great pleasure to introduce the 2020/21 Annual Report.

During the year the Committee has met five times and considered matters relating to financial issues and updates associated with the 2020/21 revenue and capital budget and financial management across the Council. As is the usual practice, a Special Meeting of the Committee was held prior to Budget Council in order to scrutinise budget options and proposals.

Other reports/presentations considered by the Committee related to:

- Surplus Council Owned Land/Asset Management Strategy
- Climate Emergency Progress Report
- Use of Social Media in the Council's Response to Covid-19
- “Manage my Requests” (iCasework) System – Statistical Update Report
- Centre for Public Scrutiny - 10 Questions to ask if you are Scrutinising Climate Change
- Draft Executive/Scrutiny Protocol;
- Ethical Business Practices Working Group Final Report – Update on Recommendations
- Digital Inclusion Working Group – Update on Recommendations
- Public Health Annual Report on Air Quality
- Air Quality and Clean Air Zone Update
- Council Tax Reduction Scheme, Council Tax Base 2021/22
- Digital Strategy
- Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures and Sickness Absence Monitoring
- Sefton’s Social Value from Development Supplementary Planning Document



- Updates on the Members Welfare Reform Reference Group

The Committee also received regular Work Programme and Cabinet Member update reports.

All agendas and minutes of the Committee can be accessed [here](#)

Finally, I would like to take the opportunity to thank Councillor Lappin, Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services for her regular attendance at meetings to update Members on issues associated with her portfolio and the Members Welfare Reform Reference Group.

Covid-19 Pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic had, and continues to do so, a major impact on Sefton's communities, businesses and workforce. This was acknowledged in a presentation made to the September 2020 meeting of the Committee in which Sefton's response and activity to the pandemic was set out. Information was provided on:

- Following the announcement of lockdown on 23 March 2020 the Council agreed a set of principles to support the most vulnerable; to work alongside partner agencies and businesses; communicate with communities; and to planning for recovery
- Governance arrangements at the start of the pandemic
- Immediate Council response
- Sefton Covid-19 statistics
- Support for residents and communities and the Council's workforce
- Economic impacts and the starting point for recovery
- Core objectives for recovery planning
- Strategic approach to recovery
- Recovery planning progress update

In conclusion it was noted that the unprecedented worldwide pandemic created a most complex set of circumstances; that the Council workforce was a credit and that the Council was able to operate a significant number of services and for staff to work agile during this time; that partnership working was very strong and enhanced relationships were established with all partners including Schools; that the Council was in a strong position going forward in terms of recovery but needed to ensure it received financial backing; and that tragically significant numbers of local people had died and families suffered loss.

The Committee was appreciative of and commended the hard work of staff in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and how they adapted quickly to new ways of working and the performance of new and additional duties; and noted that the re-introduction of services had been undertaken in full compliance with Government guidance and that if there was a change in local circumstances



then decisions would be taken accordingly; and that feedback received from residents was that they were very appreciative of the continuation of front-line visible services during the pandemic, and in particular, the refuse collection service.

However, the Committee did have concern about the Government's promise to adequately fund additional expenditure incurred by Sefton and other local authorities in dealing with pandemic issues which had not yet been forthcoming and that a close watch would have to be kept on this and pressure maintained on the Government; and that that if the number of Covid-19 cases increased in Sefton then the Council may have to take measures to again cease certain services which would have a detrimental impact on the Council's finances and exacerbate an already difficult situation.

Financial Scrutiny

The Committee received regular budgetary update reports during the year and a Special Meeting of the Committee was held on 9 February 2021 prior to the budget meetings of both Cabinet and Council. At this Special Meeting the Committee considered reports relating to: Prudential Indicators 2021/22; Treasury Management Policy and Strategy 2021/22; Capital Strategy 2021/22 to 2025/26; Robustness of the 2021/22 Budget Estimates and the Adequacy of Reserves – Local Government Act 2003 - Section 25; Revenue and Capital Budget Plan 2020/21 – 2022/23 and Council Tax 2020/21.

At this meeting the main report for consideration was the report of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services that explained that on 4 March 2021, the Council would be asked to consider and approve the Budget Plan for 2021/22 – 2024/25 and the level of Council Tax for 2021/22; and provided the Committee with:

- An assessment of the Council's current financial position and approach to the 2021/22 Budget Plan and preparation for the three-year budget period 2022/23 to 2024/25
- An update on the Government's announcement of resources that are available to the Council for 2021/22
- The Council's current financial position and the assumptions built into the Medium-Term Financial Plan;
- The proposed Budget for 2021/22; and
- The proposed Capital Programme for 2021/22

The report set out the financial strategy of the Council and the national and local financial context within which it is operating. The Council had a statutory requirement to remain financially sustainable and to balance its budget every year; and that the Council's Framework for Change Programme was a comprehensive and ambitious programme that sought to support the delivery of the Council's core purpose. As would be expected with a programme of this size and complexity that spanned a number of financial years, the detailed



proposals had been and would continue to be the subject of change as they were developed and ultimately implemented.

The following appendices were attached to the report:

Appendix A	Individual School Budgets 2021/22
Appendix B	Draft Council Budget Summary 2021/22
Appendix C	Capital Programme 2021/22 – 2022/23

Work Programme 2020/21, Scrutiny Review Topics and Key Decision Forward Plan

The Committee considered the reports of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer that sought views of the Work Programme for 2020/21, the identification of potential topics for scrutiny reviews to be undertaken by a Working Group(s) appointed by the Committee; the identification of any items for pre-scrutiny by the Committee from the Key Decision Forward Plan; and provided an update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Working Groups

During the year the Committee did not establish any new Working Groups but continued to receive update reports on the implementation of recommendations on previously approved Final Reports relating to:

- Ethical Business Practices
- Digital Inclusion

Cabinet Member Reports

In keeping with previous years and in order to keep Members informed, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board agreed for relevant Cabinet Member Reports to be submitted to appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The Terms of Reference of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee covered the portfolio of the Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services.

Pre-Scrutiny – The Key Decision Forward Plan

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has also been given the opportunity to pre-scrutinise items from the Council's Key Decision Forward Plan. The Forward Plan is submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of the Work Programme update. The pre-scrutiny process assists the Cabinet to make effective decisions by giving the Overview and Scrutiny Committee the opportunity to examine issues beforehand and making recommendations prior to a determination being made.



The Year Ahead

The Committee will continue to make progress on the following priorities over the coming year:

- New Ways of Working following the Covid-19 pandemic
- Review the Council Tax Reduction Scheme during the eighth year of operation
- Disposal of Surplus Council Owned Land/Asset -Management Strategy
- “Manage my Requests” (iCaseWork) system – Statistical Update Report
- Members’ Welfare Reform Reference Group – Updates
- Air Quality Monitoring
- Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures and Sickness Absence Monitoring
- Update on Progress of LCR Digital Inclusion Strategy
- “Tool-Kit” for Armed Forces Covenant
- The consideration of budget proposals in preparation of the Budget Report 2022/23 to 2025/26 and savings and the Medium-Term Financial Plan
- Monitoring reports on the implementation of recommendations arising from Digital Inclusion and Ethical Business Practices Working Group reviews
- Other service operational reports as deemed appropriate by the Committee

I envisage the forthcoming year to be extremely busy and challenging for the Committee due to the impact of Covid-19, which will be felt for many years to come and the difficult budgetary position and financial savings that have to be met in Sefton. Based upon the revisions relating to Government funding and the updated MTFP assumptions it is now estimated that the funding shortfall between 2021/22 and 2024/25 will be £29.847m, before any Council Tax decisions are made, and any additional service delivery options are considered. This shortfall will have to be met on top of the £233 million budget reductions identified since 2010.

Finally, and on behalf of the Committee, I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to our work over the past year. I would personally like to thank all Members of the Committee, Councillor Paulette Lappin, Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services and officers who have attended meetings for their support to me over the past year and provided the Committee with valuable information.

Councillor Sue Bradshaw
July 2021

