



Corporate Performance Report 2020/21

July 2021

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FOREWORD

I'm pleased to introduce our second Annual Performance report which aligns to the Council's Core Purpose and our contribution to achieving the partnership Vision 2030. The reports highlights some of what we have achieved, how we have managed the funding we received, and our priorities looking forward.

In these challenging times, it is vital that the Council considers very carefully where it can make the biggest difference and throughout the year the Council focused on working with our many partners to support our communities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The lockdowns and associated measures had a significant impact on the services that the Council provides to our communities, how we provide them and our workforce that delivers them. The energy and commitment of our workforce, partners and Sefton's many volunteers has continued to be second to none.

This document sets out the Council's Performance in a number of key areas and should be considered in conjunction with the Council's Financial Outturn and reports that have been provided to Overview and Scrutiny Committees throughout the year. Our Core Purpose underpinned by the Council's Framework for Change Programme targets capacity at a carefully sequenced set of key priorities. Over recent years this programme has not only helped the Council support the delivery of the Borough's 2030 Vision and its own objectives as set out in its Core Purpose, but it has also successfully enabled the Council to set and deliver balanced budgets and put the foundations in place that enabled us to respond swiftly to the impact of the pandemic.

Sefton Council will continue to develop performance reporting and robust scrutiny alongside this Annual Report.

I would like to thank all our staff, all ward councillors, volunteers, trade unions and our partners for their hard work over the year which has helped to achieve the many successes outlined in this report, and I look forward to working together over the next 12 months.

Councillor Paulette Lappin



A MESSAGE FROM THE LEADER

The last 12 months have been unlike any other within living memory. Alongside the rest of the world, Sefton has faced unprecedented challenges due to coronavirus (COVID-19).

During the pandemic local people and businesses have pulled together to support our most vulnerable residents. Our key workers made amazing efforts to keep us all safe and to continue to deliver essential services.

So I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to our workforce, the thousands of volunteers and all those key workers for everything they have done.

While a great deal of our work has focused on responding to the pandemic business as usual has not stopped. The Council is committed to tackling inequality, climate change, improving services for children and regenerating our town centres.

Leader of the Council, Ian Maher



A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Welcome to our second annual performance report.

As Chief Executive I have never been prouder to be part of a team supporting so many in our communities, delivering the everyday services that people expect and planning for the future. The challenges and pressures that we face are well rehearsed in many Council documents. We are working hard, with our partners, to make improvements in all areas and some have required specific attention such as Special Educational Needs and Disability services and following the findings of an Ofsted and Care Quality Commission visit, we acted quickly, engaging national, regional and local partners to implement a programme of improvement. This led to multi-million-pound investment across the partnership and with the improvements in engagement with parents, carers and young people this has helped start us on the improvement journey, and the visit by the Department of Education in January 2021 told us we were improving and heading in the right direction.

Despite the pandemic the regeneration of our towns has been a major factor and the award of £37.5M for the Southport Town Deal and the investment in Crosby Lakeside and the Strand Shopping centre will provide new jobs for people in our Borough and hopefully trigger more investment in these communities and surrounding areas.

Despite the financial pressures I was delighted that Members of the Council agreed in March 2021 to increase investment in Children Services and the £7 Million will enable us to support the workforce with additional staffing and will make further resources available to support children, families and carers.

Our Local Government Association review of our 2017 peer review was postponed in 2020 because of the pandemic and I am really keen to see the team return later in 2021 to review our progress.

The pandemic has shone a light on the pressures on Council services, but I am very proud in the way that all staff have responded to the pandemic I want to thank all of our staff, volunteers, trade unions and partners for their dedication and hard work.

Chief Executive, Dwayne Johnson



Core Purpose

The Council's role in delivering the 2030 vision.

Sefton 2030

Protect the most vulnerable: i.e. those people who have complex care needs with no capacity to care for themselves and no other networks to support them. For those who are the most vulnerable we will have a helping role to play, we will challenge others to ensure we all protect the most vulnerable and where we need to we will intervene to help improve lives

Facilitate confident and resilient communities: the Council will be less about doing things to and for residents and communities and more about creating the capacity and motivation for people to get involved, do it for themselves and help one another. We will create an environment in which residents are less reliant on public sector support and which have well developed and effective social support

Commission, broker and provide core services: the Council will directly deliver fewer services but will act as a broker and commissioner of services which meet the defined needs of communities, are person-centred and localised where possible. We will deliver services which can't be duplicated elsewhere or where we add value.

Place-leadership and influencer: making sure what we and what others do are in the best interests of Sefton and its residents and has a contributing role to the 2030 vision of the borough. This includes strong leadership and influencing partner organisations to work towards common goals and building pride in the borough.

Drivers of change and reform: the Council will play a key role in leading change and reform to improve outcomes for Sefton residents and continuously improve the borough

Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: that is, people having the level of money they need to take care of themselves and their family; creating the conditions where relatively low unemployment and high income prevail, leading to high purchasing power; and having enough money to invest in infrastructure.

Generate income for social reinvestment: the Council will develop a commercial nature and look to what it can do either by itself or with others to generate income and profit that can be reinvested into delivering social purpose.

Cleaner and Greener: the Council will work with others to maintain Sefton's natural beauty and ensure that its many assets provide a contribution to Sefton's economy, peoples wellbeing and the achievement of the 2030 Vision.

Delivering Sustainability

Climate Emergency

The Council declared a climate emergency in July 2019. Since then we have reduced the Council's carbon footprint by 10% from last year's baseline and this means we are on track to meet net zero carbon by 2030. We have a number of key projects that will support this and you can find out more about this area of work in the Climate Change Annual Report 2020/21.

Ethical Business & Social Value

During the year our Treasury Management Strategy was updated so that Council investments and deposits are aligned to our Core Values. All Procurement staff have received Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply Ethical Accreditation, this training ensures that Procurement staff have built their understanding of how to behave ethically and establishes a commitment to ethical behaviour.

Also the Procurement team has received Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply Ethical Accreditation, this training ensures that Procurement staff have built their understanding of how to behave ethically and establishes a commitment to ethical behaviour. During 2021 we will continue with this work.

Improving Children's Services

Over the last twelve months we have made significant progress in delivering our Special Educational Needs and Disability Improvement Plan. We have taken a true partnership approach in delivering this change and the latest feedback from the parent carer survey demonstrates that trust and confidence is increasing.

We recognise that there is more work to do in improving Children's Services and have increased investment in this area to enable us to make the change needed. Demand for support is increasing and we will continue to call on the government to increase the level of funding available and make the reforms required.

Financial Sustainability

2020/21 posed the great challenge in the management of the Council's budget. From the start of the year the impact on the Council's cash flow and approved budget in addition to responding to the pandemic was a primary area of focus for members and officers. The Council experienced a significant loss of income from council tax and business rates receipts in addition to the fees and charges it traditionally charges for services. In addition it experienced significant pressure on its key service including Children's services and waste management. The Council focused on ensuring that key services continued to be provided to residents and where a response to the pandemic was required it met that requirement – this was supported by detailed financial management, maximising existing resources and lobbying for additional support from central government both to support provision of services and to administer grant payments or other reliefs to residents and businesses. The Council has placed financial sustainability as a key priority and this approach ensured that in 2020/21 the Council's budget is reporting an underspend which will ensure that its financial health is maintained.



TOGETHER A STRONGER COMMUNITY

Sefton communities are known for their generosity, giving of their time and talents and this year saw so many in our communities benefitting from the work of so many volunteers. Their dedication and generosity enabled the Council to maintain those vital services that matter so much.

The Council's **purpose of place leadership and influencer** continued to be vital in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic as we worked with partners to unlock the borough's collective resources for the benefit of all and to ensure that people were well informed. The Council coordinated a group of partners to ensure that a robust community response and support plan was in place and being delivered to respond to the changing levels of need within our communities.

Working with our partners we offered support to over 24,000 people identified as clinically extremely vulnerable people in our communities. Over 32,000 contacts were made with those that needed continued welfare support during the lock down periods. In addition to this Contact Centre operated 7 days per week taking more than 9,000 calls regarding access to testing facilities, supermarket referrals, Test & Trace Self-Isolation payments and over 50,000 text messages were sent to clinically extremely vulnerable people to direct them to support were sent to those shielding. The Council also delivered over 1700 emergency food parcels to clinically extremely vulnerable people who needed support whilst shielding, this was in addition to planned contributions to Food banks, donations from ward budgets and Sefton's Emergency Limited Assistance Scheme (ELAS).

Over the year Sefton's local businesses and voluntary organisations provided packed lunches, food hampers and meals to local families. The Council also responded quickly to the need to deliver a Free School Meals scheme in place in October, issuing over 5000 vouchers to eligible families. The promotion of the scheme also led to an increase in the number of families applying for Free School Meals.

We worked hard with our partners across Merseyside to make people aware that we are still here and available to support those who need our support. The Council joined partner organisations across the Liverpool City Region to launch a new domestic abuse campaign telling anyone experiencing abuse during the Coronavirus pandemic: #YouAreNotAlone. This multi-agency initiative aimed to raise awareness, remind those experiencing abuse that support is still available, and encourage victims to report incidents to the police.

In October 2020 during Black History Month we highlighted historic moments, events, achievements and contributions of black people in our Sefton communities and across Merseyside, as well as shining a light on people who are striving for equality and diversity in our borough. In the same month, as part of Hate Crime Awareness week and in partnership with Stop Hate UK, we raised awareness and encouraged the reporting of hate crimes and incidents which continues to be a priority for the Council. As part of LGBT+ History Month in February 2021 we celebrated some amazing people who form part of the LGBT+ community's past and present.

Since the start of the pandemic, as part of our role to **Commission, broker and provide core services**, the Council worked extremely hard to secure PPE. In the early stages we worked with other Local Authority's in Merseyside to ensure we could maintain a supply of PPE to our care homes and social care workforce through collaborative procurement and mutual aid with a focus on keeping staff and vulnerable people safe throughout the pandemic. We continued to respond to changes in guidance and as government supply became more reliable have provided PPE to a range of settings including unpaid carers.

The Council website and social media was updated on a regular basis so that our communities were well informed and had access to the latest information. The Council also worked hard to ensure that information was accessible to those with communication needs and provided information direct to others such as care homes and support groups.

Place leadership and influencer - Through our #ShowThemYouCare campaign, local people once again demonstrated their generosity donating biscuits, boxes of cakes and sweets and flowers, plants and treats, to brighten up the day for the people living in local residential homes. Also, many local children sent paintings, drawings, poems and letters to cheer up care home residents and local test centres.



A BOROUGH FOR EVERYONE

Schools in Sefton remained open for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers with measures in place to protect children and staff. Through good partnership working we promoted attendance, resulting in above national average attendance for vulnerable children. As part of our work to facilitate confident and resilient communities we worked closely with schools to ensure that children and young people could continue to access education and training opportunities during the pandemic, sourcing over 1100 laptops, and that families had access to the most up to date information and advice.

The Council continued driving change and reform to improve outcomes for local people. Throughout the pandemic the Council continued to prioritise the delivery of our SEND Improvement Plan with meetings continuing remotely. This work has meant that there has been a significant improvement in a number of areas during the year including the number of Education, Health and Care Plans completed within 20 weeks and the number of reviews completed, the co-production of parent carer surveys and Planning for Adulthood information.

Throughout the year the Council, acting as broker, worked hard with partners to ensure that access to COVID testing met the needs of communities and was localised. In April 2020 Sefton brokered the very first pilot mobile testing facility for key workers with Coronavirus symptoms in Cheshire and Merseyside. Following this very successful pilot mobile testing sites were implemented in Bootle, Litherland, Maghull, Aintree, Crosby and Ainsdale. July and August 2020 saw the opening the first ever Local Testing Site facilities in Cheshire and Merseyside in Bootle and Southport. October saw two new, walk-through Local Testing Sites, at Crosby Library and Netherton Activity Centre.

In December 2020 COVID testing was further strengthened with SMART coronavirus testing for people with no symptoms becoming available at walk-through sites, at Bootle Leisure Centre, Splash World in Southport and Aintree Racecourse.

In February 2021 the Council coordinated the surge testing operation to understand the spread of a South African variant of Covid-19 in three wards in Southport, training over 200 staff, visiting over 17,000 homes and helping to register over 8000 tests in three weeks with the support of partners and many volunteers.

The Council has worked hard during the COVID 19 pandemic to protect the most vulnerable and remain accessible to all. We have done this by working with care homes, other social care providers, schools, the voluntary, community and faith sector and our partners.

Throughout the pandemic we have continued to find innovative ways of delivering early help to support families in need. Three Family Wellbeing Centres remained open throughout and we also delivered online support sessions to families during lockdown. When restrictions allowed, families received the support they required in their gardens or outdoors. We created support packs and delivered these to the families that needed them in a socially distanced safe way. We changed the early intervention and prevention huddle from a physical meeting to a virtual meeting ensuring that we continued to identify individuals and families that need help and support at the earliest opportunity to ensure we put the right intervention in at the right time. Partnership working flourished, as we worked together to meet the needs of families in our communities.

We continued to support vulnerable young people who need additional support, utilising a variety of digital options such as face time and zoom which enabled regular contact through challenging times. Young people responded well to this approach and continued to engage with our services well. Some of our staff delivered outreach to families to provide bespoke support through lockdown which received excellent feedback, going forward we will continue outreach support to the families who need it most.

As part of the government's response to homelessness during the pandemic, "Everyone In", we commissioned a range of emergency accommodation to ensure that no-one slept rough and became more vulnerable to the pandemic. Our focus around homelessness remains proactive rather than reactive. We are working with key partners to identify potential homeless cases at the earliest opportunity and using a variety of approaches to prevent homelessness.

We ensured our vulnerable children and families have been supported throughout the pandemic. Social Workers have maintained contact with children and families, ensuring children were being seen and having access to advice and support when required. This has been supported by members of our partnership and close working relationship with education settings.

Adult Social Care continued to provide support to and protect the most vulnerable throughout the pandemic, and where needed undertook face-to-face visits to ensure individual welfare checks were completed and the safeguarding of vulnerable adults maintained. When day care opportunities closed, impacting on over 650 individuals across the Borough, the Adult Social Care team ensured alternative provision was put in place where needed to ensure assessed need was met. Throughout the pandemic, the team worked with providers to ensure care could be delivered to the most vulnerable safely, establishing regular meetings with providers and administering over £10 million in additional grant funding to the care sector.

In February 2021 the Government published a White Paper “Integration and Innovation: Working together to improve health and social care for all” and in response to this the Council and its partners are developing an Integrated Care Partnership in readiness for the proposed implementation of this new legislation. Integrated care happens when NHS organisations come together with Council’s, Housing, third sector and other stakeholders to meet the needs of their local residents. The Council’s Health and Wellbeing Board will be central to our local integration approach and will oversee progress. The Integrated Care Partnership will involve a wide range of partner organisations from housing, public health, the Voluntary, Community and Faith sectors as well as GP’s to deliver joined up Health and Social Care services across the whole life course to improve Health and Wellbeing outcomes for the people that live in Sefton.





LIVING, WORKING AND HAVING FUN

The Public Health team focused on the emergency response to the Covid pandemic, whilst continuing to deliver wider public health interventions. The team, along with Council colleagues and partners in Public Health England, the NHS, schools, care homes and voluntary organisations have worked together to identify cases, manage outbreaks and prevent onward transmission of the virus. Key interventions include the development of local testing and contact tracing services, surge testing to identify possible contacts when a new variant was identified and supporting those requiring to self-isolate. The impact of Covid-19 has not been felt equally. It has exposed and exacerbated many long-standing health inequalities. Going forward Public Health will work with partners to ensure activities are aligned with efforts to promote community recovery post Covid and promote health and wellbeing for all.

Our everyday services became even more important to our residents throughout the year as we all had to stay at home more. The support for our refuse collectors was incredible as they were shown how much they are valued by our communities as they carried on throughout the pandemic. Our parks and coastline saw an incredible increase in footfall as we all appreciated the beauty on our doorstep. We responded quickly and ensured increased facilities for rubbish disposal, parking at Ainsdale and toilets were available for everyone visiting the coast. Despite this, our volunteering groups worked overtime to keep our patch beautiful. Sadly, our Cemeteries and Crematoria team have also been incredibly busy and have been supported by staff from other services which had to close.

The pandemic had a significant effect on our libraries, leisure and arts sector with our facilities closed to the public for large parts of the year. Many of our staff were temporarily redeployed, during the closures, to other critical services such as Cleansing, Green Sefton, Cemeteries and Crematoria as well as testing sites and test and trace calls. We continued to offer some Leisure activities virtually to support people with their fitness and mental wellbeing during lockdown.

Our libraries offered an online lending service, access to ancestry software as well as a select and collect service when restrictions allowed. The Atkinson continued to offer a range of innovative online exhibitions throughout the lockdown periods and this was recognised in February 2021 as the Atkinson scooped 2 awards at the Liverpool City Region Culture Awards for 2020. The Peoples Choice Award for Outstanding

Contribution to Culture as well as the Impact Award – Covid 19 Creative Response, were both suitable recognition for the work the team did during the pandemic.

Sefton was delighted to be chosen as the Liverpool City Region’s Borough of Culture for 2020. Although the COVID 19 pandemic meant that we were not able to celebrate in the way that we wanted, we adapted and delivered a wide range of alternative virtual events, such as the on-line Sefton Comedy Hub and Atkinson exhibition. We also delivered new installations such as the Red Rum wall mural in Southport and worked with partners to deliver programmes that connected communities across Sefton during the challenging period of lockdown during the year.

During the year works have started on creating a new Driving Range at Bootle Golf Course. The new range will open later in 2021, providing a great new facility in the area. In October and November 2020 we also carried out public consultation on the future vision for Southport Links Golf Course and its buildings. We received a very positive response and the feedback will help to shape the vision, future developments and management of this historic course.

During the Pandemic, whilst all attention was understandably focused on health and community impacts, we recognised the challenge of sustaining the current and future economy, a series of measures were introduced by the Planning Service which sought to facilitate investment, stimulate developer interest, simplify process, flexibly extend the life of permissions and generally operate in a manner which encouraged regeneration and development. This has led to an unprecedented uplift in the number of planning applications received, which will be implemented over the coming months.

Between November 2020 and February 2021, Sefton consulted upon revisions to policy which determines the way in which social housing is allocated to our residents. The findings of this consultation will help to inform and update ‘Property Pool Plus’ (which is the system used to match people with Social Housing and housing associations across the Liverpool City Region).

The pandemic has impacted the whole retail sector, including the Strand in Bootle, but the centre remains a vital asset for local communities, and has remained safely open throughout the year. Moreover, strategic planning and development work has continued on the future of the centre, including the acquisition and demolition of the sites between the Strand and the canal, upon which new public spaces and a food, beverage and leisure offer are being delivered.

The Council launched its wholly owned housing development company, Sandway Homes Limited, in January 2019 to help accelerate the delivery of the Local Plan target for 11,000 new homes to be created in the borough by the end of the decade, deliver high quality, policy exemplar, tenure blind developments in the areas that they are needed and to generate financial returns to invest more in core services across the borough. Despite the challenges of COVID-19, the company has made strong progress and has started construction on 2 sites with a third due to commence summer 2021 delivering nearly 150 new homes over the next 24 months.



VISIT, EXPLORE AND ENJOY

The COVID 19 pandemic impacted significantly on the number of visitors and local people being able to enjoy our local attractions, events and cultural offer, many businesses and attractions were forced to close and events cancelled. But the events programme for the coming year is already being developed, taking account of changing restrictions, and promises to be better than ever, working with local businesses and the wider community the roadmap to recovery provides a real stimulus for Sefton to reinvigorate its visitor economy. And we are already seeing businesses returning and reopening, adapting and providing life to our High Streets and town centres, supported by the Council and our partners.

Throughout the year the development of Crosby Lakeside continued which means that many will be able to enjoy many new facilities including a new fitness suite and spin studio. These changes are part of a £3.1m scheme to transform the whole of the centre. Southport Market is being transformed into a leading food, drinks and events space, with work now underway. The market is scheduled to reopen in early summer 2021. The £1.4m scheme, which is a key enabler and an early part of Sefton Council's Covid-19 recovery plan for Southport, will see 10 new food units and a feature bar installed. This will be supported by a flexible events space able to host high-quality markets along with other events.

In March 2021 it was announced that Southport is set to receive £37.5m in government funding for a range of exciting projects across the town centre and sea front, following submission of a Town Investment Plan in October 2020. The funding will help to invest in existing attractions and the creation of new all-weather attractions in the sea front area, as well as the creation of new enterprise hubs to help attract and grow businesses in the town centre. The Town Deal will ultimately help create over 1,000 new jobs plus more than 300 construction jobs and an extra 1 million visitors per year are expected to visit.



CLEAN, GREEN

AND BEAUTIFUL

Sefton's coastline, an internationally protected 'nature reserve', is stunning, and we understand why people want to visit. The coast saw many visitors throughout the year, in periods of lockdown and when restrictions eased. At its peak, we saw more than 24,000 people on the beaches at any one time. In its role of **Place-leadership and influencer** the Council worked closely with partners. We developed and delivered the Coastal Visitor Action Plan, to keep Sefton's coastline safe for residents, visitors and our own employees. Sadly, not everyone demonstrated the care and commitment to our natural environment leaving tons of litter behind and causing several serious incidents of serious anti-social behaviour. In December 2020 Cabinet approved funding to support over £350,000 of improvement works at Ainsdale Beach. After a year of unprecedented demand, this investment in new permanent and semi-permanent facilities, including 'off-beach' car parking arrangements, toilets and rubbish management will ensure a better experience for residents and visitors. It will also improve safety and accessibility as well as providing vital protection to the natural environment. In anticipation of continued high visitor numbers, the Council has put in place a similar Action Plan for 2021, which builds on our experience from last year.

In December 2020 we welcomed back sheep and cattle on to the Nature Reserves at Ainsdale and Birkdale, as part of the Council's continuing conservation works, a cost effective and natural way to protect our dune system.

In September 2020, in line with its existing commitment to **cleaner and greener**, the Council approved a Climate Emergency Strategy and committed to reducing carbon emissions and to acting in line with the scientific consensus that we must reduce emissions to net zero by 2030.

In January 2020, Storm Christoph brought flooding to parts of Maghull. The Environment Agency issued severe flood warnings, with more than 400 properties considered at risk of flooding. The Council played its part in a multi-Agency response to support residents and to mitigate and avert danger, including setting up a temporary Rest Centre for those forced to evacuate their homes. In the end, only a small number of homes were flooded, but the event served to highlight the risk in this and other parts of the borough, where 1 in 7 properties are at risk of flooding. Since this incident, the Council has established a Strategic Flood Resilience Working Group, bringing together Councilors, Council officers, Environment Agency and United Utilities and has signed a Joint Statement of Intent to work together and drive investment into flood risk management in Sefton.

The last 12 months have unfortunately seen a large increase in all types of waste in the borough, as people spent more time than ever at home due to COVID restrictions. The Council dealt with more than 9000 extra tonnes of waste, with increased volumes of household refuse and recycling and a 46% increase in flytipping in rear entries and other places, all whilst our own resources were stretched by the pandemic.

The Council continues to work to improve Air Quality in the borough, including exploring the feasibility of Clean Air Zones to improve air quality in our worst affected areas. Between March and May 2020, during the early stages of Covid-19 “lockdown”, we saw traffic volumes fall by up to 50%, resulting in significant reductions in levels of NO2 and a substantial improvement in air quality. This was not a permanent improvement but does show how significant improvements would result from reduced and cleaner vehicles. In March 2021 the Council found out that its bid for £122,500 of government funding, to deliver a school’s educational project, had been successful. The project will raise awareness of Air Quality and encourage behavioural changes that will have immediate and long-term positive impacts on Air Quality in Sefton.





ON THE MOVE

In the summer of 2020, the new slip roads at Junction 1 of the M58 opened to traffic. As well as improving journey times between Maghull and North Liverpool, the scheme will reduce traffic on the A59 and some residential roads and facilitate sustainable economic prosperity and potential future development in the Maghull area.

The Council also delivered several other important transportation schemes, including junction improvements on the A59, Maghull; and active travel schemes such as upgrading the Southport Coast Road Cycle path, creating an all-year-round multi-use and disability-friendly path at Dibb Lane, Little Crosby, and commencing work on a new Kirkby-to-Maghull Cycle Path.

Over the course of the last year, the Council developed and agreed a business case for significant investment in street lighting across the borough. This 4-year project will see more than £12m invested to fit LED lights to all street lights and illuminated bollards, signs etc. and replace life-expired street lighting columns across the borough. This will reduce the Council's carbon emissions by 16%; energy costs by 70% and maintenance costs by 40%. The money saved on energy will make the project self-funding.





OPEN FOR BUSINESS

The Council has supported local businesses in many ways during the pandemic. Since the start of the Pandemic, a programme of successive nationally and locally funded grants have been administered by the Council, ploughing millions of pounds into the local Sefton economy, across the most acutely impacted sectors, supporting thousands of businesses and helping to keep tens of thousands of our population in work.

Throughout 2021, Environmental Health, Licensing and Trading Standards teams have continued to support businesses to operate safely and legally. Providing advice on existing and new Covid-related legislation and guidance, through thousands of telephone conversations and visits, working closely with other agencies such as the Health and Safety Executive and Police. We have also taken the necessary enforcement action where non-compliant businesses failed to comply with the law and placed staff and customers at risk. We quickly changed or implemented new systems to keep people trading where the law allowed them to, including adapting and maintaining licensing arrangements to keep taxis running.

A key priority for Adult Social Care and Health has been to support and protect care home residents and their staff through the last 12 months and into recovery. An virtual Care Home Hub was established early into the pandemic made up of professionals across Social Care, primary care , medication management, workforce development , public health ,community health teams in Lancashire Care and Mersey Care. We developed free training and development webinars, provided weekly guidance, responsive in reach, distributed to date just over £13m of government grant with a

further £2.6m scheduled to be distributed and coordinated Sefton's response to PPE, including the supply of free equipment and training and guidance on its use.

All Social Care providers continue to be supported through the pandemic recovery and new ways of working and supporting vulnerable residents of Sefton have emerged such as an increase in personalised care and support on a 1:1 basis and creative ways of keeping in touch with people who need social care in our communities.

The Council's own Strategic Growth Programme demonstrates leadership through investment and action, as we see key developments such as the refurbishment of Crosby Lakeside, Southport market, refurbishment of Sefton Adult and Community Learning's Cambridge Road Seaforth, all progressing on site and scheduled for completion this summer. But alongside these, there are many major housing schemes which have been supported that provide investment into infrastructure, jobs and training for local people, supply opportunities for local businesses, and providing a quality and mix of housing types and tenures throughout the Borough. Support has also been provided for a number of key town centre developments, major tourism attractions, and to existing businesses. Further Council investments are in the pipeline, with a major canal side attraction in Bootle, public realm and enterprise investments as part of Southport town deal, and bids for Government's Levelling Up Funding for our town centres are being progressed.





READY FOR THE FUTURE

The Council supports its workforce to develop and this year saw 18 new apprentices employed and a further 58 members of the Council's workforce take up the opportunity to take up an apprenticeship. The inaugural North West finals of the National Apprenticeship awards saw our digital marketing apprentice highly commended as an advanced level Apprentice. The digital marketing apprenticeship develops skills in social media, improving people's access to websites and making them easy to navigate. 2021 will see us make further improvements to the Council website and continue to develop the Local Offer.

In December 2020, Sefton's Kickstart Gateway Organisation status was confirmed. The Kickstart scheme provides funding to create new jobs for 16 to 24-year olds on Universal Credit and who are at risk of long-term unemployment. This allows the Council - both as an employer but also working with the business community - to facilitate access to employment, and to act as a job brokerage and employability support services via its Sefton@Work team. In addition, the Council is also involved in the local set up of the government's 'Restart Scheme', whereby the Council will work alongside DWP in delivering this employment initiatives to support individuals (who have spent between 12 and 18 months claiming Universal Credit) to return to sustained employment in the Intensive Work Search Regime.

Our IT transformation programme continued, with much of the work focused on improving our ability to improve agile working and this work has enabled many Council staff to work from home during the COVID 19 pandemic and for many democratic meetings to take place remotely. These changes included the procurement and deployment of a cloud-based contact centre software, within ten days, the new 'cloud contact centre' was up and running and 40 staff were able to work-from-home taking

and making calls. This enabled vital Council services to continue and meant people who were shielding across Sefton could access much-needed support.

During the year plans have also been put in place to procure and deploy telephony and bulk print and mail solutions.

In February 2021 Cabinet approved the Digital Strategy an overarching plan which articulates the Council's ambitions and is based on key priorities identified within the 2030 Vision for Sefton. Working with our partners the Council will develop approaches that will see our communities and businesses benefit from new digital technologies that keep people informed and connected.

As a result of the pandemic, Cabinet received monthly reports throughout the year that detailed performance against the Council's approved budget, however in light of the financial pressures that were presented by COVID 19 both in terms of impact on Council expenditure but just as importantly the impact on income sources including Council tax and Business rates and extensive supplementary commentary and risk analysis was also contained. These reports included detail of engagement with government departments and those grant and support schemes that the council administered to support residents and local businesses.

These monthly reports supported the Council in not only managing the in-year budget but also the development of the 2021/22 budget that was subsequently approved by Council in March 2021.

In 2020/21 the Council spent £25.9m on its Capital Programme, investing both in the development and improvement of our highways, schools amongst many other areas.

At Cabinet in January 2020, Members agree the first phase of the Council's Asset Disposal Strategy. The work undertaken on the back of this was further reported to Cabinet in 2020/21 and capital receipts from this programme are due to be received from 2021/22.

The census survey takes place every 10 years and gives us the most accurate estimate of all the people and households in our area. The information from the census helps us to understand need, develop policies and plan for the future. It is important that local people complete and return their census, because without a complete picture we will have gaps in the data that enables the Council to make decisions. Getting the best possible response rates for the census will make sure that decisions are based on accurate, high-quality data.

Our Business Intelligence and Corporate Communications Teams, worked closely with the National Census 2021 team, launching a wide-reaching marketing communications campaign to raise awareness of the census, highlight the importance of the census and explain why and how people should take part; through public and media relations, and adverts targeted at both the general population, and others addressing the needs of specific groups, such as students, older people, or people who may not speak English as their first language.

FOCUS ON DELIVERY

Over **1000** more volunteers to support our communities



Over **24,305**

Shielding



1,735 Emergency Food Parcels have been delivered locally



32,427 welfare calls have been made in total to local those people shielding in Sefton



£44.36m business grants to **3713** businesses



1st Mobile test unit in Cheshire and Merseyside



Over **650** planning decisions and applications have been made



223 complaints dealt with by Trading Standards and Environmental Health

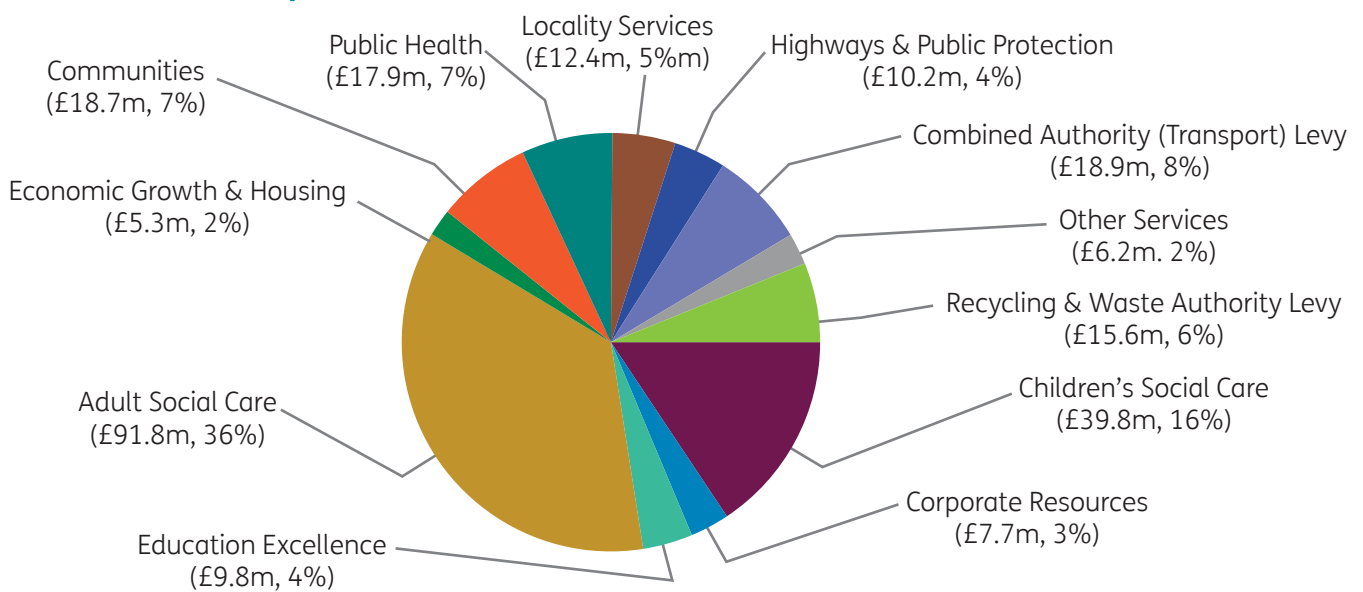


15% increase in the amount of recycling collected

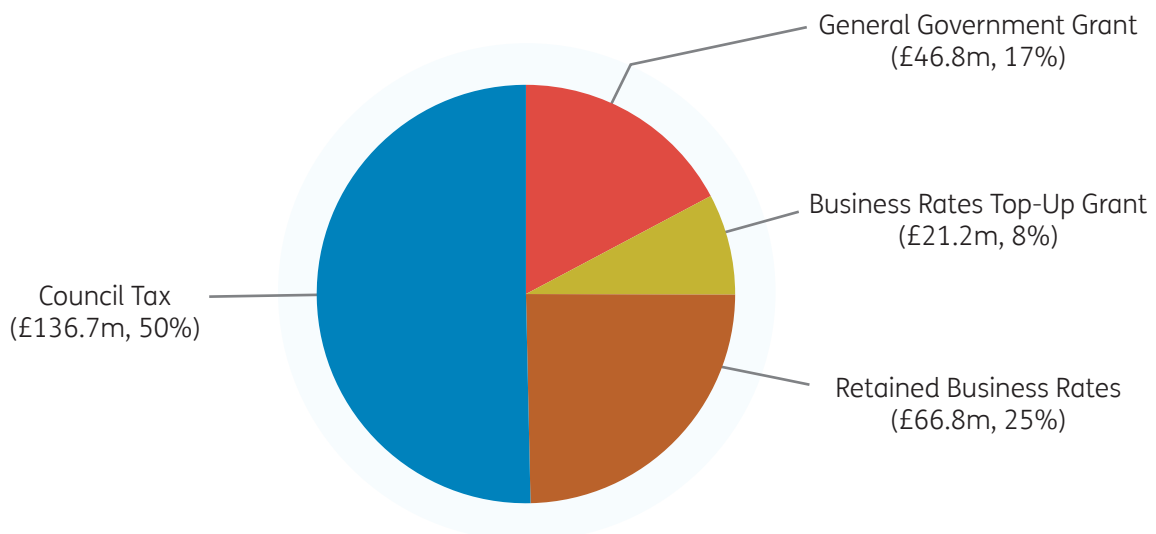


FOCUS ON PERFORMANCE

Service Expenditure 2020/2021



Sources of Funding for 2020/2021 Budget Requirement



Children's Social Care

During the year demand pressures continued to increase in Children's Social Care. The pandemic has had an impact on the number of adoptions and foster carers, the Council is currently developing an Improvement Plan.

Looked After Children Rate per 10,000 Population	
Sefton 19/20	105
Sefton 20/21	114.5
National 19/20	67

Child Protection Plans Rate per 10,000 Population	
Sefton 19/20	48
Sefton 20/21	46.6
National 19/20	43

Children in Need (Rate per 10,000 Population)	
Sefton 19/20	420
Sefton 20/21	427
National 19/20	324

Percentage of Looked After Children Adopted	
Sefton 19/20	13%
Sefton 20/21	7%

Number of Foster Carers	
Sefton 19/20	123
Sefton 20/21	73

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities

The SEND Continuous Improvement Board has overseen significant progress this year and the Council is now in line with national averages

Education Health & Care % Plans Issues within 20 Weeks	
Sefton 19/20	23%
Sefton 20/21	67%

Early Help

The early help offer see the Council working with partners, communities and families to provide effective early help. The pandemic impacted this area of work as the Council and partners were unable to carry out some interventions due to restrictions. Up to the end of November claims were 30% lower compared to the same period last year, however in November the numbers started to increase and the trend continues.

Early Help Number of Episodes Started	
Sefton 19/20	3,910
Sefton 20/21	4,299

Early Help Percent Re-referred in Year	
Sefton 19/20	20%
Sefton 20/21	12%

Early Help Percent Ended 'Aim Achieved'	
Sefton 19/20	19%
Sefton 20/21	18%

Troubled Families Families Turned Around	
Sefton 19/20	953
Sefton 20/21	357

Troubled Families Turn Around Funding	
Sefton 19/20	1.7m
Sefton 20/21	0.285m

Youth Offending First Time Entrants	
Sefton 19/20	41
Sefton 20/21	17

Youth Offending Custodial Remands	
Sefton 19/20	1
Sefton 20/21	0

Youth Offending Custodial Sentences	
Sefton 19/20	1
Sefton 20/21	0

Initially during the pandemic reporting of domestic abuse incidents to the police fell but as restrictions eased more people came forward to ask for support. The Council worked with partners throughout to ensure that access to support remained available throughout the pandemic. The Council also secured additional funding and is currently recruiting three more independent domestic violence advisors.

Domestic Abuse Police Recorded Incidents	
Sefton 19/20	4,360
Sefton 20/21	4,552

As part of the government’s response to homelessness during the pandemic, “Everyone In”, we commissioned a range of emergency accommodation to ensure that no-one slept rough and became more vulnerable to the pandemic.

Homelessness	
Number of New Cases	
Sefton 19/20	1,796
Sefton 20/21	1,126

Adult Social Care continued to provide support to and protect the most vulnerable throughout the pandemic, and where needed undertook face-to-face visits to ensure individual welfare checks were completed and the safeguarding of vulnerable adults maintained.

Adult Social Care	
Percent of Contacts Signposted	
Sefton 19/20	14%
Sefton 20/21	23%

Adults in Social Care	
Clients in Long Term Care	
Sefton 19/20	4,474
Sefton 20/21	4,166

Local Welfare Scheme	
Applications Receiveds	
Sefton 19/20	8,954
Sefton 20/21	7,226

Local Welfare Scheme	
Awards Made	
Sefton 19/20	6,113
Sefton 20/21	5075

Local Welfare Scheme	
Expenditure £000s	
Sefton 19/20	467
Sefton 20/21	395

Unemployment Rate	
ONS Modelled Rate	
Sefton 19/20	3.4%
Sefton 20/21	4.3%
Northwest 20/21	4.2%

Leisure and Libraries

The pandemic had a significant effect on our libraries, leisure and arts sector with our facilities closed to the public for large parts of the year.

Library Visits

Average Per Month (000s)

Sefton 19/20 **72.9**

Sefton 20/21 **7.3**

20/21 Excludes March

Library Computer Use

Average Per Month (000s)

Sefton 19/20 **9.2**

Sefton 20/21 **0.6**

20/21 Excludes March

Library Loans

Average Per Month (000s)

Sefton 19/20 **62.7**

Sefton 20/21 **19.2**

20/21 Excludes March

Tourism

The tourism sector as a whole has been adversely impacted and will take sometime to fully recover, recovery plans are being put into place to ensure the sector returns to 2019 levels within the next two years. As part of the recovery Sefton have secured £37.5m from The Town Deal, one of the major projects will see a new Events Centre built in Southport capable of hold entertainment events, conferences and E-sports event and will be pivotal to Sefton's recovery.

Day Visitors

Millions

Sefton 19/20 **8.4**

Sefton 20/21 **3.3**

Tourism Economic impact

£ Millions

Sefton 19/20 **597**

Sefton 20/21 **258**

Total Tourism Employment

Numbers

Sefton 19/20 **850**

Sefton 20/21

Staying Visitors

(000s)

Sefton 19/20 **759**

Sefton 20/21 **350**

Highways

The Council maintains over 600 miles of roads.

Lighting Faults Fixed within 5 Days	
Sefton 19/20	5,693
Sefton 20/21	5,263

Highway Maintenance Percentage of All Pickups	
Sefton 19/20	6,834
Sefton 20/21	6,330

Weed Spraying Spend 000s	
Sefton 19/20	135
Sefton 20/21	325

Highway Defect Repairs Numbers undertaken	
Sefton 19/20	11,375
Sefton 20/21	10,389

Gritting Spend in £000s	
Sefton 19/20	856
Sefton 20/21	1,182

Waste

Waste services continued throughout the pandemic. Unfortunately the level of fly tipping increased throughout the year

Waste Recycled / Reused Percentage	
Sefton 19/20	34%
Sefton 20/21	35%

Residual Waste 000s of Tonnes	
Sefton 19/20	73
Sefton 20/21	81

Fly Tipping Clearance Costs £000s	
Sefton 19/20	304
Sefton 20/21	315

Bins Not Emptied Percentage of All Pickups	
Sefton 19/20	0.12%
Sefton 20/21	0.15%

Total Bin Pickups Millions	
Sefton 19/20	7.8
Sefton 20/21	7.6*

Planning

A series of measures were introduced by the Planning Service which sought to facilitate investment, stimulate developer interest, simplify process, flexibly extend the life of permissions and generally operate in a manner which encouraged regeneration and development. This has led to an unprecedented uplift in the number of planning applications received, which will be implemented over the coming months.

Planning Applications Major Determined on Target	
Sefton 19/20	90%
Sefton 20/21	78%

Planning Applications Minor Determined on Target	
Sefton 19/20	91%
Sefton 20/21	85%

Planning Applications Plan Checks on Target	
Sefton 19/20	100%
Sefton 20/21	91%

New Homes Granted Planning Permission	
Sefton 19/20	1,088
Sefton 20/21	1,654

New Homes Granted Planning Permission	
Sefton 19/20	736
Sefton 20/21	476

Council Tax & Business Rates

The Council's financial model relies on income in respect of business rates and councils tax and the council has an excellent performance record in collection which means key services to residents can be delivered- during the year both of these sources came under pressure as businesses were forced to close or operate at reduced capacity meaning their income was lower and residents were faced with financial challenges caused by the pandemic- as a result these income sources were lower in year as set out. The council has engaged with residents and business throughout the year to offer support and some government support has been made available to the council to alleviate an element of the impact with the collection of outstanding balances continuing into 2021/22

Council Tax £ millions		
	Collected	Target
19/20	154.8	155.8
20/21	157.7	160.1

Business Rates £ millions		
	Collected	Target
19/20	70.8	71.0
20/21	31.9	32.7

