

## QUESTIONS RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

1.	<b><u>Question submitted by Councillor Sir Ron Watson to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Ian Maher)</u></b>
	<b>Subject: Deputy Leader of the Council</b>
	Does the Leader of the Council have full confidence in his Deputy?
	<b>Response:</b>
	“Yes”
2.	<b><u>Question submitted by Councillor Sir Ron Watson to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Ian Maher)</u></b>
	<b>Subject: Questions at Council</b>
	The Leader of the Council has confirmed that Labour Members discussed possible Questions from themselves in advance and were presumably given the relevant answers.  Will the Leader of the Council now explain why the time of the Council was taken up with Questions to which the Members concerned already had the information they required?
	<b>Response:</b>
	“All Council members are entitled to ask questions at the relevant part of Full Council meetings.”
3.	<b><u>Question submitted by Councillor Prendergast (Leader of the Conservative Group) to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Ian Maher)</u></b>
	<b>Subject: Children’s Services forecast overspend</b>
	Children’s Services is forecast to overspend by around £17 million this year.  Can the Leader of the Council explain how much of an impact the inadequate rating from Ofsted has had on the budget for Children’s Social Services?
	<b>Response:</b>
	“The rating of the service has not had a direct impact on the financial position of the service during the current year. The overspend has been driven by a number of events that have occurred since the budget was approved by Members in March 2022/23.  They include the impact of inflation on accommodation costs, the increased accommodation cost charged for by external providers who are often private equity backed and the exponential growth in staffing agency rates that has seen the traditional workforce move to these organisations. All of these aspects are affecting all councils in the Country and have been reported extensively to central government for years with no resulting action to stabilise the relevant markets or the right amount of funding coming to

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	councils.”
4.	<b><u>Question submitted by Councillor Prendergast (Leader of the Conservative Group) to the Cabinet Member for Children’s Social Care (Councillor Doyle)</u></b>
	<b>Subject: Minutes of the Improvement Board Meetings</b>
	<p>Despite repeated requests, at Full Council and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Children’s Services, the minutes of the Improvement Board meetings have still not been made available to members of the general public.</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member please let us know when they will be made available with a specific date for publication?</p>
	<b>Response:</b>
	<p>“The DFE appointed Commissioner and Independent Chair of the Improvement Board will be attending the next Overview and Scrutiny committee on the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023, as agreed in the last Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He will update the committee in full of regard to the function of the Improvement Board and give reassurance in how it operates and discuss the improvement Journey for Sefton.”</p>
5.	<b><u>Question submitted by Councillor Howard to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Ian Maher)</u></b>
	<b>Subject: Crosby Promenade Sand Clearance Concept</b>
	<p>A representative from a local community group proposed a sand clearance concept for Crosby promenade, which has been reviewed by the Council. Could an update please be provided on that review?</p>
	<b>Response:</b>
	<p>“At my request, senior officers have reviewed the proposed sand clearance option in depth.</p> <p>The suggested solution would have significant impact on residents in the area given the potential routes identified (all of which would lead to significant numbers of heavy goods vehicle movements daily through residential areas), and on users of the beach (given the requirement for the movement of HGVs along the beach from the proposed points of access).</p> <p>Given the nature and severity of the expected impacts of such an operation on communities and the environment, it is therefore not proposed to progress this option further. The Council will continue to review options for sustained access along the promenade and will continue to engage constructively with all stakeholder and community groups on the opportunities for the future of this area. The Council would like to thank those who have supported in providing information and input into this review.”</p>
6.	<b><u>Question submitted by Councillor Evans to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Ian Maher)</u></b>

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	<p><b>Subject: Breakdown of cost of live streaming meetings</b></p>																																																										
	<p>"At the last full council meeting, the Leader of the Council promised he would provide a written response to my supplementary question asking for a breakdown of the £100,000 figure he provided for the cost of live streaming meetings. As this has not been received, can the Leader now provide a full costing and breakdown of that figure."</p>																																																										
	<p><b>Response:</b></p>																																																										
	<p>"May I pass on the apologies of the Council's Chief Legal and Democratic Officer as he intended to provide you with the breakdown following the last Council meeting but forgot to do so.</p> <p>The estimate of £100,000 was provided following consultation with neighbouring authorities who have such facilities.</p> <p>In Sefton we, of course, hold meetings in 2 town halls so duplicate facilities or a portable system would have to be purchased. Given the prohibitive costs we have not gone to market to test the estimate provided.</p> <p>We have, however, gone to the market to explore new improved portable wireless microphone systems and the quotes received are £33,851.35 and £49,409.65. To date there is no budget to purchase a new system, therefore further work is required to develop a costed and funded option."</p>																																																										
<p>7.</p>	<p><b><u>Question submitted by Councillor Shaw to the Cabinet Member for Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services (Councillor Lappin)</u></b></p>																																																										
	<p><b>Subject: Programme of Meetings - Municipal Year 2023/24</b></p>																																																										
	<p>In relation to item 12 on tonight's agenda (Programme of Meetings - Municipal Year 2023/24) would the Cabinet Member please advise me:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. what percentage of scheduled meetings are to be held in Bootle Town Hall?</li> <li>2. what percentage of scheduled meetings are to be held in Southport Town Hall?</li> </ol>																																																										
	<p><b>Response:</b></p>																																																										
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 59%</li> <li>2. 41%</li> </ol> <table border="1" data-bbox="231 1608 1410 2092"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="6"><b>SEFTON COUNCIL SCHEDULED MEETINGS 2023/24</b></th> </tr> <tr> <th rowspan="2"><b>Meeting</b></th> <th rowspan="2"><b>Total</b></th> <th colspan="2"><b>Bootle</b></th> <th colspan="2"><b>Southport</b></th> </tr> <tr> <th><b>Total</b></th> <th><b>%</b></th> <th><b>Total</b></th> <th><b>%</b></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Cabinet</td> <td>13</td> <td>7</td> <td>54</td> <td>6</td> <td>46</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Council *</td> <td>8</td> <td>4</td> <td>50</td> <td>4</td> <td>50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Audit &amp; Governance</td> <td>5</td> <td>3</td> <td>60</td> <td>2</td> <td>40</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Licensing &amp; Regulatory</td> <td>4</td> <td>2</td> <td>50</td> <td>2</td> <td>50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Planning **</td> <td>13</td> <td>7</td> <td>54</td> <td>6</td> <td>46</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Overview &amp; Scrutiny</td> <td>23</td> <td>13</td> <td>57</td> <td>10</td> <td>43</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Health &amp;</td> <td>4</td> <td>4</td> <td>100</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<b>SEFTON COUNCIL SCHEDULED MEETINGS 2023/24</b>						<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Bootle</b>		<b>Southport</b>		<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>	Cabinet	13	7	54	6	46	Council *	8	4	50	4	50	Audit & Governance	5	3	60	2	40	Licensing & Regulatory	4	2	50	2	50	Planning **	13	7	54	6	46	Overview & Scrutiny	23	13	57	10	43	Health &	4	4	100	0	0
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Wellbeing Board					
Safer Sefton Together ***	4	4	100	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>41</b>

\*Council                      The venues for the Annual meetings of the Council for 2023/24 and 2024/25 have not yet been determined. The figures for these two meetings are not therefore included in the statistics

\*\* Planning                      Meetings are scheduled to meet alternately between Bootle and Southport Town Halls. However, the Committee has agreed that should petitioned items be included on the agenda, then the meeting will be held at Bootle Town Hall. At the time of answering this question it is impossible to know if petitions will be submitted to particular meetings.  
Accordingly, the statistics have been compiled on the basis of the meetings alternating between Bootle and Southport.

\*\*\*Safer Sefton Together                      The schedule of meetings indicate that the meetings will be held in Bootle. Accordingly, the figures in the table have been calculated on this basis. However, it is anticipated that these meetings will be held remotely as was the case last year.

Public Engagement and Consultation Panel                      It is the intention in 2023/24 to hold the six scheduled meetings in a hybrid fashion. Members can attend physically at Bootle Town Hall or remotely using Microsoft Teams. Accordingly, meetings of the Panel are not included in the above table.

Appeals Committee; Licensing Sub-Committee; and Pay and Grading Committee                      Statistics for these meetings are not included in the above table as no scheduled meetings are yet planned.

**8. Question submitted by Councillor Sir Ron Watson to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Ian Maher)**

**Subject: Southport Pleasureland**

The development of the Southport seafront area has within it the need for a quite integral programme of development in respect of Southport Pleasureland. The lease granted to the company concerned, Universal Rides, and I understand that during the discussions that took place by the Southport BID Board on which there was no representation from Elected Members representing the area assurances were given by the Company that no public funding would be necessary as this would be provided from private sources.

1. The first review of the lease is rapidly approaching.

Could the Leader of the Council please confirm what monitoring arrangements take place on a regular basis and who is involved?

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	<p>Has experience over the past few years led our Legal Officers in particular to consider whether the leasing arrangements remain appropriate and in the best interests of Sefton residents?</p> <p>2. The provision was that there would be an investment estimated at £5m in the initial stages.</p> <p>Could the Leader of the Council please advise how much has actually been spent and on what has been achieved?</p> <p>3. There were press reports that a major international style ride was to be erected and the press report featured a rollercoaster ride sited at Coney Island, New York.</p> <p>Does the Leader of the Council know if this press report was accurate and if so, what supplementary action has been taken concerning design and construction following on from any planning permission that has been granted?</p> <p>4. There have also been press reports by the Senior Executive at Pleasureland to the effect that a number of high-profile rides are being imported from various European sites and that he will be responsible for their assembly and maintenance.</p> <p>Do we have any details of what is involved i.e. the types of rides, the capital cost, the construction and assembly timescale and whether any planning permission has been sought at this stage?</p> <p>5. Planning Permission was granted for a major ride on the site but this was not adhered to by the Company who had the ride constructed on a different area for which no planning permission had been granted.</p> <p>Were Chief Officers and/or any Members of the Council advised in advance of this action?</p> <p>Planning Permission was sought retrospectively but has any justification ever been given or sought as to why the original planning approval was ignored?</p> <p>6. The Company concerned had quite a large piece in the local press complaining about the fact that roadworks had taken place which had in turn impacted adversely on their revenue over the period of time it took to complete the work.</p> <p>Will the Leader of the Council confirm whether or not advance notice of this work was given and if so to what timeframe?</p> <p>7. There was extensive press coverage in the Southport Visiter recently that related to a serious incident where one of the major rides broke down and families with young children were stranded for some 40 minutes - literally up in the air - which caused great distress.</p> <p>Do the Council Officers concerned with health and safety issues check on a regular basis that all the appropriate safety certificates and conditions are met by Universal Rides?</p>
	<p><b>Response:</b></p>
	<p>1. Regular meetings have continued with the business since the start of the current lease arrangements on the main site, and these will continue. The focus of these have been around the options and interest in further development of the site. Until</p>

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the first trigger point is reached on the lease, there is no requirement upon the lessee to demonstrate the level of investment to date.

2. The lease does not require an ongoing narrative on investment to date. Upon reaching the milestone, the Council will engage further with the lessee and consider the evidence presented at that time. The outcome of this, and potential implications and options, will be reported to Cabinet Member at the appropriate time.
3. Planning permission was granted for the erection of a roller coaster attraction (reference DC/2021/01795) in November 2021. Details of this were picked up in the local press at the time of the planning submission. Pre-commencement conditions have yet to be discharged post-approval. No further details are currently available.
4. No, but the site has permitted development rights (conveyed at a national level for amusement parks) which allows certain forms of development without the need for planning permission (up to a height limit of 25m). Therefore, much of the investment will fall outside of planning controls of the Council.  
[The Town and Country Planning \(General Permitted Development\) \(England\) Order 2015 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
5. The original planning application site for the wheel required the release of a covenant and the granting of a lease. In advance of this being granted, the wheel was delivered, and the operator erected it in its current position to enable its use.  
  
No advance warning of this action was given. The case for the new location was included within the retrospective planning application. An applicant is not required to provide a justification for changing his/her mind and choosing an alternative location.
6. Council officers and the organisers of events speak to stakeholders well in advance of any events that involve closures, and officers always encourage organisers to open a dialogue with Pleasureland and other key operators in affected areas. In addition, a minimum of three weeks before any closures the Council sends out a notice to interested and affected parties, including Pleasureland.
7. This is a matter for the operator and the Health and Safety Executive.”