

**CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT**  
**Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills – 07<sup>th</sup> March 2023)**

COUNCILLOR	PORTFOLIO	DATE
Patricia Hardy	Communities and Housing	March 2023

**COMMUNITY SAFETY AND ENGAGEMENT TEAM**

**Neighbourhoods**

Due to an increased demand for skips the team have altered the community skip schedule to accommodate as many requests as possible. From April 2023, there will be an increase in the cost of each skip used for the scheme. When the costs have been finalised and agreed the team will share the information with Councillors.

A day of action took place on Bianca Street in partnership with One Vision Housing, Merseyside Police and Community Payback on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> January after numerous reports of ASB and fly tipping. OVH provided 2 x 8-yard skips on the day which assisted Community Payback in the clearing of a piece of overgrown land on the junction with Stanley Rd. the Councils rear alley crews and Hit Squads also supported on the day along with enforcement officers from Environmental Health.

Officers have worked with the schools STRAND partnership on their topic of Cyber Security. Partners have arranged for Police within the Cyber Security Division to attend a school Council event to offer support and information to the young people to help with their assignment of debating “Should Social media be Banned”.

Merseyside Police have been given £62k from the Home Office to spend on reduction of crime linked to the Night-Time Economy (NTE) in Southport. After several meetings with the Police and Sefton Arc, eight cameras have been identified for upgrading including a change of camera type. The change in type will switch the main camera on West St / Waverly St to a dome, to alleviate the issue of being able to see in which direction the camera is pointing. Southport BID have also asked for a discussion to discuss CCTV optimisation in the town centre.

Parking around the beach areas in Formby is an historic problem that has proved difficult to resolve for several years. One of the contributing factors is cars parking illegally on doubly yellow lines, especially at key junctions. This has led to access difficulties along several roads. The Harington Councillors are investing Section 106 funding to install permanent bollards on two key junctions to prohibit cars parking illegally and improve access for pedestrians and road users.

**Cost of Living / Welfare Reform**

Foodbank voucher information:

1st April 2022 – 1st January 2023	South Sefton	Southport
Total Vouchers received	5541	1596
Adults Fed	6698	2187
Children Fed	4511	1292
Total Fed	11509	3479
Crisis Type	Low income – 4148 vouchers presented 8692 people fed	Low income – 896 vouchers presented 1924 people fed
Family Type	Single 3094 vouchers presented 55.84%	Single 753 vouchers presented 47.18%

**Sustainable Affordable Living Coordinator**

The Project Coordinator has developed a bespoke SharePoint Site and Microsoft Teams group to facilitate the new Sustainable Affordable Living Network (SALN) which will be the network that brings together Food Banks and related organisations in the same sector (Food Banks/Pantries, Community Groups & Growers, Development Trusts etc.) to be able to collaborate and share knowledge, facilitated further by a monthly meeting to discuss any pertinent issues with the benefit of all partners present.

The Teams group and SharePoint will create a 'Hub' with different channels within pertaining to different aspects of Sustainable Living, such as Food Security, Affordable Warmth and Community Growing, which will allow our partners to post any pertinent information they believe they should be aware of.

**Holiday Activity Fund**

During the Christmas period 1230 young people attended 21 HAF holiday clubs, of which 1132 were funded through the HAF programme. 905 primary aged and 227 secondary aged attended, including 185 SEND young people. Attendees took part in the usual physical and creative activities offered by HAF providers as well as Christmas parties, cooking sessions, silent discos, and trips to Gulliver's World, the pantomime, and the cinema.

The team are currently taking applications for Easter HAF provision and have four new holiday clubs operating for this first time this year. It is expected that there will be approximately 1350 places for young people over Easter across 38 providers.

**Hate Crime**

The Hate Crime JAG (formerly MARAC) are aware of increasing reports of far-right graffiti in different parts of the borough and are looking at ways of addressing this. Merseyside Police Hate Crime Coordinator will be attending the Sefton Prevent Multi Agency Group in the future to work with partners to identify possible areas where radicalisation could happen.

**Equalities**

The new Disability staff group and LGBT staff group have had their third meetings and discussions have led to a number of issues being raised which will be addressed by the corporate equality group. The Diverse Ethnic Background group and Women's Network continue to meet regularly.

**Anti-Social Behaviour**

Officers have supported Crosby Housing Association who have reported 3 of their residents causing ASB over a period of 18 months. Officers investigated the allegations and have issued a Community Protection Notice to one resident and warning to the other two residents. All the evidence is now with Crosby Housing Association for them to act as the Landlord.

**Strategy Adoption & Production**

On the 2nd of February 2023, Cabinet agreed to the adoption of both the Safer Sefton Together Strategy and the Domestic Abuse Strategy.

**Domestic Abuse Strategy**

The Domestic Abuse Strategy is a key requirement of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (DA) which places a statutory duty on Local Authorities to :-

- Form a Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board (LDAPB).
- Conduct a Local Needs Assessment.
- Develop and Publish a Strategy.
- Give effect to the Strategy.
- Monitor Strategy effectiveness.

- Report back to government via the Domestic Abuse Commissioners Office.

Whilst Sefton has had a Domestic Abuse Strategy for several years, we have taken the opportunity, following the statutory duty placed on the LA following the DA Act, to refresh the existing strategy to not only meet our statutory requirements but to reach much further in addressing such an important issue.

This strategy sets out how we will do this in Sefton over the next five years. It outlines the key themes partners will focus on and identifies priorities which will be translated into practical areas for action which will be monitored by the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board.

The strategy is based around three strategic themes:

- Prevent – Early intervention and prevention to reduce the cycle of abuse.
- Protect - Keeping victims and their families' safe whilst challenging the behaviour of perpetrators.
- Repair - providing ongoing support beyond crisis intervention and developing resilience for the future.

It also incorporates the elements of Sefton's Safe Accommodation Strategy for victims of domestic abuse which the local authority is required to have as part of the 2021 Domestic Abuse Act.

By adopting the strategy, the Council, and wider partnership, will have an overarching strategic document to inform the delivery of services. The Council can also bid for additional funding streams that will serve to address the priorities contained within. The strategy will also ensure compliance with statutory requirements.

### **Safer Sefton Together Strategy**

Safer Sefton Together (SST) Partnership have produced a 3-year strategy. The strategy reflects the priorities of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), the priority themes contained within the annual Sefton Strategic Needs Assessment (SSNA) as well as local knowledge gained from staff, elected members and community groups.

The Strategy contains 6 themed priorities.

- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Domestic Abuse & Violence Against Women & Girls
- Vulnerable People
- Child Exploitation
- Community Engagement
- Serious Organised Crime & Serious Acquisitive Crime

The strategy outlines the success we have achieved for each theme so far but also sets out the priorities for activity over the next 3 years. Many of the areas for development involve a public health approach to long term generational behaviour change. The strategy also includes a list of boards, partnerships and strategies where the work of the SST overlaps and a strategic link needs to be maintained.

The strategy places the priorities for Community Safety on a more realistic 3-year timetable that allow for longer term projects, that will affect significant change.

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### **Cultural Strategy procurement**

Throughout 2022 the Sefton Cultural Steering Group has met to share information on cultural delivery in the Borough and to plan a Cultural Strategy for Sefton.

In bringing together cultural stakeholders with independent networks the meetings have also begun the process of building an infrastructure for collaboration between artistic practitioners. The steering group have developed the procurement brief for the Cultural Strategy in order to commission consultancy support to deliver the following elements.

- Needs Analysis
- Consultation & Engagement – to ensure we are capturing the aspirations of Sefton’s residents and cultural stakeholders.
- Authorship – to produce the document.
- High level action plan

The indicative timeline for delivery will see appointment ready for the new financial year with a draft version of the strategy available by end of July.

## **LIBRARIES & INFORMATION SERVICES**

### **Summer Reading Challenge benchmarking**

This year the Library Service threw everything at the summer Reading Challenge in an attempt to get back the number of participants to pre-pandemic levels. Sefton had a very successful year and have faired well against neighbouring local authorities. While having the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest number of participants in the North West, Sefton had the highest number of participants in the Liverpool City Region, far outstripping some of our neighbours.

Participation and completion numbers for the LCR are shown below:

Local Authority	Numbers participating	Numbers of completers
Halton	517	245
Knowsley	484	207
Liverpool	616	201
<b>Sefton</b>	<b>2678</b>	<b>1902</b>
St Helen’s	1561	1061
Wirral	2436	1576

### **Successful community event at Netherton Library**

Community engagement has brought good results at Netherton Library this year, with library visits up by over 40%. Much of this is down to a new approach to community engagement by library staff. This December saw the library host it’s first ever Christmas community event which 45 residents attended. The choir from St Benedict’s School performed Christmas carols in the library and staff provided craft sessions to showcase the library as a community hub.

### **New ICT infrastructure rollout begins**

The long awaited roll out of replacement public computers has now begun. Netherton Library was selected as the pilot site and this has gone well with minimal disruption. As well as all the public printers being replaced, all computer base units are being replaced and upgraded to Windows 10. The security filter has also been replaced with a new filter called Checkpoint, and a new version of deepfreeze installed which allows for remote updates and fixes being applied by Agilisys. Roll out will continue throughout February and into March.

### **Heritage Fund bid success**

Earlier in the year Libraries submitted a bid to the Heritage Fund to work on improving heritage activities out of Meadows Library. Unfortunately, the bid was unsuccessful due to the high demand for funding from the Heritage Fund. However, a follow up bid has been approved by the Heritage Fund. Work will start in the new year on constructing a model railway in the Meadows

Leisure Centre garden, theming the library with Hornby images, and the creation of a heritage walk. The Frank Hornby Society are working as partners with the library to ensure any activities and changes to the library fit with the existing heritage centre at Meadows, and to provide expert consultancy.

### **First Community Christmas meal event**

Bootle Library hosted its first Christmas community meal for socially isolated residents on the 16<sup>th</sup> December with over 30 residents attending. Each resident who attended received a Christmas card and were provided with a hot vegetarian Christmas meal. They were all encouraged to help with the meal creation and were delighted with the results. Only 1 resident was disappointed; after asking if we were laying on food, and been told yes, she then asked for 2 sausage butties and a cup of tea. She got the tea but declined the vegetarian meal.

## **THE ATKINSON**

### **Theatre Programme**

Panto by numbers: in reviewing its delivery of the Aladdin Christmas pantomime our team has captured the following statistics to highlight the scale of the production -

- £49,000 secondary income from bar and merchandise sales
- 14,425 tickets across 37 shows (including school performances)
- 1239 light up wands sold
- 3934 ice creams sold

This represents a tremendous effort from all Atkinson teams, including the additional support provided from back office and curatorial officers to ensure we had sufficient staffing in place for every performance.

Forthcoming highlights from the Theatre programme include a variety of music performances such as T.Rextasy, Ian Prowse & Amsterdam and Paul Young. Blackeyed Theatre bring their production of John Godber's Teechers to the stage and we are delighted to be hosting popular wildlife presenter and film-maker Gordon Buchanan as part of his *30 Years in the Wild* tour.

### **Exhibitions Programme**

The Henry Moore Foundation has produced this fascinating video to promote their exhibition on Victorian sculpture, *The Colour of Anxiety* - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-xjb58JY-Nw>

The Atkinson's painting *Pygmalion & Galatea* by Ernest Normand is on loan to the Foundation and features in the film.

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**The Sefton Open** is an annual exhibition celebrating the creativity and artistic talent across the Borough. This year it will run from 1 April to 13 May. The entry form is now available to download from The Atkinson's website. This handy video has also been created to help local artists to prepare their artworks for submission.

<https://www.theatkinson.co.uk/exhibition/sefton-open-2023/>

### **Museum Programme**

Digital promotion: The Atkinson has been invited to join the **Bloomberg Connects app** which enables users to upload video content and podcasts. The project is sponsored by Bloomberg Philanthropies and other organisations participating include the British Museum and the Victoria & Albert Museum. The app also links through to Art UK which promotes merchandise sales from the Atkinson's collection.

### **Southport Library**

The provision of a Warm Hub offer at the library continues to be appreciated by local residents with each session attracting approximately 14 attendees each time.

The new library pods are proving to be helpful spaces for confidential 1-1 sessions and the library has taken our first booking for use of the Transparent Language online facility for an Arabic speaker to develop their learning English.

## **Other news**

**Visit England Assessment:** following a recent inspection the Atkinson has increased its score from last year by 1% to 87% and retained its overall venue evaluation as 'very good'. This is the seventh consecutive year of increased assessment scores. It was particularly pleasing to note that the highest score was in the staffing category which is now 96%! This is based on the inspector's direct interaction with staff and volunteers all around the building from the library, galleries, shop and foyer.

The summary for the building describes The Atkinson as: 'A very well laid out, maintained and popular attraction which encourages a broad demographic range of visitors to include families and educational groups.'

On 26<sup>th</sup> January the Atkinson hosted a **Music Careers Day**, a collaboration between Sefton's Music Service and the Merseyside Music Education Hub Alliance. The event attracted approximately 100 young people from across the Borough to explore career pathways in the music sector. Sessions included presentations from industry professionals and artists covering topics such as public relations, radio sound production, DJ workshops and music journalism.

The February 2023 edition of **Lancashire Life** 'People & Places' section includes a feature on the new Bee Hive installed on the Atkinson roof, and provides a positive overview of the centre's varied programme.

## **Communications**

Events promoted via the Council website, The Atkinson website, The Atkinson social media, through the press and Liverpool City Region

## **HOUSING**

### **Damp Mould and Condensation (DMC)**

As reported at the last meeting in the wake of these tragic events I have directed officers to carry out a review of housing enforcement in the borough. Substantial progress has been made with regard to this.

- Review of the Housing Enforcement Policy – the policy has been reviewed in light of the tragic events in Rochdale and updated accordingly.
- Review of the 'service request pathway' – this has been completed and the Council Website has been updated to ensure that Registered Provider tenants are clear on how they can make a service request
- Communication Campaign – as reported at the last meeting a comms campaign using the Council's comms channels has been running over winter, linking to the guidance on the Council's website and other resources that will help. This will be repeated every winter in subsequent years.
- Staff Training and Equipment – a review of staff training and equipment has been completed and found to be up to date.
- Data – a review of previous cases has been completed and will be used to evaluate the adoption of a risk-based approach to prioritising future service requests relating to damp mould and condensation cases following completion of a revised private sector housing condition survey in conjunction with the majority of the LCR authorities, a piece of work which has started.
- Registered Providers – discussions continue with Registered Providers operating in the borough about their own response to damp, mould and condensation in their own properties.
- Staff Guidance – guidance has been issued to all frontline staff who go into people's homes on damp, mould and condensation, including information that can be passed onto tenants of affected properties on positive action they can take to minimise the issue and where to seek help if necessary.

### **Housing Strategy (2022 – 2027)**

Following approval of Sefton's new Housing Strategy by Cabinet on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2022 an Action Plan has been developed by the Housing Team in consultation with officers from other teams to document the actions and initiatives to deliver against the objectives outlined in the strategy. The Action Plan also includes clear owners of each initiative, and timescales for delivery.

The Action Plan will be published on the Council's website so that the community expectations from the Housing Service are clear. I will monitor progress against the plan in my regular briefings with officers.

## **Extra Care Housing**

As colleagues are aware the Council has a target to deliver 1306 new Extra Housing units before 2036.

I am happy to report that work has commenced on a new Extra Care scheme in Bootle by provider Housing 21 and Sefton officers are actively involved with their commissioning and construction project team. Estimated completion of this scheme is Jan 2025.

Officers have also met representatives from Safe Regeneration about their revised proposals for the Coffee House Bridge site in Bootle, which includes a large Extra Care scheme. The Council will continue to work with Safe Regeneration to help bring forward their exciting proposals for the site.

In the north of the borough the Sandbrook Road Extra Care scheme in Ainsdale which will include the development of a Short Term Assessment unit (STAU) is progressing with design and costing of the STAU expected to be finalised in March with a view to the final scheme proposals being considered by Cabinet in the spring.

To support the provision of extra care housing Sefton's first Extra Care Nominations Policy, process and system has now been drafted and has been approved at Public Consultation and Engagement board in November. Public consultation on the new policy commenced on the 10<sup>th</sup> February and will run for 6 weeks. Responses will then inform a final draft that will be presented to Cabinet for approval summer 2023 with a view to being implemented from October 2023.

## **Private Sector Housing**

### *Enforcement and Licencing*

As committee will be aware on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2022 Cabinet approved the re-designation of both the Selective and Additional (HMO) Licensing Schemes for a further 5 years until end Feb 2028. The current schemes that came to an end in Feb 2023, have proved successful.

Almost 3,900 licences have been issued under the current schemes. 3000 were estimated to require a licence at the start of schemes almost 5 years ago. The team continue to enforce against those landlords that have still failed to apply for a licence and against landlords that are in breach of licence conditions. Since 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2022 they have served 21 Intention to serve Notices for failure to licence or breach of a licence condition. Following this 10 Final Civil Penalty Notices, for these same offences have been served, which have resulted in financial penalty fines. This income is re-invested into the enforcement work of the Housing Standards Team.



There have been 80 requests for service relating to poor housing standards received since 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2022. The team have taken enforcement action in an increasing number of cases. 48 Statutory Notices have been served since 22<sup>nd</sup> Oct 2022, including 7 Emergency Prohibition Orders of properties, and 2 Prohibition Orders. These have had to be served due to the serious and imminent risk to the health and safety of the occupiers. 18 statutory notices have had to be served in relation to lack of Smoke or Carbon Monoxide detection, a further 18 in relation to potential dangerous electrical installations and 12 for failing to meet the minimum Energy Efficiency Rating for a privately rented property.

Work to reduce the number of long-term vacant homes has continued, with a further 2 properties being identified for Enforced Sales and one Enforced Sale completed since the previous report.

Management of the Council's Gypsy and Traveller site continues, and improvement works identified on a recent condition report are currently being undertaken. Since the previous report there have been 3 unauthorised Gypsy & Traveller encampments, which totals 22 since April 2022.

### **Rough Sleepers & Homeless services**

The average daily presentations (Mon-Fri) for January 2023 was 11.1. This is a 40% increase from a 6.7 daily average in January 2022. January 2023 has been the busiest month for presentations. August 2022 was the first time that presentations went above 200 in one month. In the past 6 months presentations have reached 200 or more per month on 4 occasions as shown below.

#### *Human Trafficking or Slavery*

All Council Chief Executives were recently written to in order to inform them that from 31 January 2023, Home Office legislation changes the immigration leave type that will apply to include a new eligible class for confirmed victims of Human Trafficking or Slavery.

All confirmed victims of Human Trafficking or Slavery must be granted limited leave to remain in certain circumstances. The Temporary Permission to Stay (TPS), establishes a route for a person who is a confirmed victim of Human Trafficking or Slavery, who is in the UK without leave, to be considered for leave. It will replace the current Discretionary Leave (DL) for victims of Modern Slavery and making them eligible for homeless services. This additional burden on homeless services will be closely monitored and reported to me at my briefings.

#### *Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme*

The Government announced the Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP) £200m programme in late 2022. The objective of SHAP is to increase the supply of accommodation with accompanying support to address gaps in homelessness pathway provision. However, I am sorry to have to report that in the Liverpool City Region only Liverpool and Wirral are eligible to bid towards this fund direct due to their high numbers of rough sleepers and people in temporary accommodation.

#### *Riverside Dispersed Accommodation Programme*

In 2022, Riverside Housing Association were commissioned to deliver a dispersed model of temporary accommodation with support for families which Sefton's Housing Options would have usually struggled to rehouse. Since September 2022, six families have been placed into accommodation either in Bootle or Litherland. A 4-bedroom, 3-bedroom and two 2-bedroom have been identified for use on this project. The work

has become even more critical because of the cost of living crisis as shown by the following case study from one of the support works, one of many similar case studies that officers have shared with me:

*XX and her 2 children moved in to their new property on the 16/01/23. The family were evicted from their private rented accommodation due to the landlord selling the property. So far, I have supported with setting up utility bills and finding a suitable school for her son. XX works part time and has a non-dependant son who works, she is aware there may be a deduction in housing benefit. I will be visiting weekly for the first 6 weeks and monitoring her budgeting.*