

## CABINET MEMBER REPORT

### OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGULATORY, COMPLIANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES) 13 JUNE 2023

Councillor	Portfolio	Period of Report
Paulette Lappin	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services	June 2023

#### **Finance**

Within the finance service, there has been significant activity on a number of key issues:

Following the approval of the 2023/24 budget, budget adjustments have been incorporated into each service's budget to form the initial budget for the year. This has been loaded into the Council's Financial Management System.

The Council's revenue outturn position is currently being finalised with a view to ensuring that the overall position is balanced with no call on the Council's General Balances. The position will be reported to Cabinet in July along with the Capital outturn position and performance information for 2022/2023.

The draft Statement of Accounts for 2020/2021 was published at the end of July 2021 with the final Statement of Accounts being presented to Audit and Governance Committee on 15<sup>th</sup> December. However, although nearly all work has been finalised, the audit is still to be completed. This is mainly due to a technical valuation issue that needed to be resolved at a national level – the Government has now introduced legislation that will allow councils to resolve the issue. Officers are working with the Council's external auditors to understand what changes, if any, are required. Should any further amendments be required since the December 2021 Committee, the Chair has been granted delegated authority to approve the final Statement of Accounts following these changes.

The work to close the accounts for 2021/2022 was completed, with the revenue and capital outturn position reported to Cabinet in July. The draft Statement of Accounts for 2021/2022 have been published. The Council's external auditors are continuing with their audit. It is hoped that this will be finalised soon with a few residual issues remaining.

Due to the delays in finalising the audit of the 2021/2022 Statement of Accounts the production of the Statement of Accounts for 2022/23 has been delayed. Officers will produce and publish the accounts as soon as possible after the completion of the 2021/2022 audit. The audit of the accounts for 2022/2023 is expected to commence later in the year.

#### **Customer Centric Services**

##### **Annual Billing**

All areas of the service are continuing to deal with high volumes of work as is typical and expected at this stage in the year following the issue of annual bills for Council Tax, Business Rates and benefit annual uprating notification letters.

As part of Council Tax billing, the Service has effectively implemented the Council Tax Support Scheme, i.e., a payment of up to £25 to households in receipt of Council Tax Support to help them pay Council Tax in 2023/24. The payment discounts were included on the annual bills issued in March.

### **Energy Bills Support Scheme / Alternative Fuel Funding Support**

The EBSS AF commenced on 27th February for eligible households to apply for support and is open for applications until 31st May 2023. This consists of a one-off £400 non-repayable discount to eligible households who have not received the main EBSS payment automatically from their energy supplier to help with their energy bills between 1 October 2022 and 31 March 2023. By the end of April, the service had received 189 applications, 110 of these applications have been verified, approved and payments made.

The Alternative Fuel Payment Alternative Fund (AFP AF) scheme was launched on 6th March to help eligible households with domestic fuel costs. This is a one-off £200 non-repayable discount to eligible households who have not received support directly from their energy supplier to help with their fuel costs between 1 October 2022 and 31 March 2023.

In total, at the end of April, the Council has made 119 payments totaling £45,800 and has rejected 44 applications that do not meet eligibility criteria. Customers must wait 30 working days from making the application before contacting the Council, applications are being dealt with within the 30-working day target. The Schemes are due to close on 31st May, with final payment to reach bank accounts by 7th July 2023.

### **Customer Services**

Customer Services experienced a very busy April for call volumes and visits to both One Stop Shops; in total, 17,710 telephone calls were answered.

Of calls that were received, 82% were answered and 18% were abandoned. Customers continue to be encouraged to use the online Council services if they can, allowing for staff to handle calls for prioritised services, i.e., Children's Social Care and ELAS.

The Contact Centre continues to handle a steady increase in telephone enquiries for Adult Social Care as customers are finding it more difficult to get appointments with their doctor and other health professionals.

ELAS enquiries remain consistently high as customers experiencing hardship seek support with food and utility bills. It is noted that call volumes for this service started to reduce at the end of the month as further cost-of-living payments of £301.00 were made to residents in receipt of means tested state benefits.

There was also a high volume of Cleansing telephone calls due to various green bins not being collected and there being a shortage of new brown bins. During the busier periods, a greeting message is relayed encouraging customers to report the issues online. It is evident that customers chose this option with the abandonment rate for this service so high.

With the implementation of various changes to the electoral system and voters now required to provide photographic identification at polling stations, Election enquiries were far higher than usual.

Enquiries for Council Tax started to reduce as the tail-end of annual billing passed. For the customers who did call, many were requesting that their payments be extended over 12- instalments or seeking advice about what financial support is available. Other Council services

that also experienced a notable increase in telephone enquiries were Blue Badges who currently have a backlog of applications.

With customer demand at Bootle One Stop Shop increasing week-by-week, the drop-in service continues to be well received by customers who have complex enquiries or requiring financial support.

In April, 2,859 customers attended Bootle One Stop Shop, this included 626 taxi drivers, 204 of which had an appointment and a further 422 who 'dropped in'. There were 976 customers who attended with a Council Tax or benefits enquiry, and 49 customers seeking ELAS support. The remaining 1,208 customers were seeking general council-related advice at reception.

At Southport, 645 customers attended the Atkinson, with 198 customers booking an appointment to discuss their Council Tax or benefit and the remainder seeking general council – related advice at reception.

While overall customer contact is continuing to increase month-on-month, enquiries for Social Care and ELAS remain prioritised above all other services that are offered by Customer Services.

### **Taxi-Licensing**

The processing of all Taxi Licensing general enquiry e-mails and new/renewal vehicle plates continues to be excellent, with most of the workloads again being processed within 2-3 days of receipt. For Driver renewals, customers are generally issued with a renewal letter four-weeks in advance of their licence expiry date and are asked to drop-in at Bootle One Stop Shop to apply for their badge.

For the new/renewal of vehicle plates, a submission by e-mail from the customer is required. At present customer demand for this service remains exceptionally high with over 600 new/renewal/transfer plates being processed each month.

### **Migration of Revenues and Benefits document management system**

The rollout of the new Revenues and Benefits document management system is continuing with work still taking place to migrate existing historical documents in line with data retention policies and regulations. Staff continue to familiarise themselves with the new application and changes to working practices.

There has been an initial impact on increasing outstanding workloads due to intermittent system issues throughout the early weeks of May which resulted in some staff being unable to access the system at times. The issues have now been resolved.

### **Citizen Access - Revenues**

A project to introduce a web-based citizen access portal for Council Tax and Business Rates customers to manage their accounts on-line has commenced. A project start-up meeting has taken place and a target date of 30 September 2023 has been agreed for completing the implementation.

### **Risk and Audit**

The **Internal Audit** team are continuing to work on delivering the internal audit plan with a current focus on reviews of:

- ASC Finance Budget Management
- Sefton New Direction Governance review
- Review of number of Schools.
- Highways Maintenance
- SHOL Governance review
- Sandway Homes finance review
- Annual Governance Statement
- Assurance Mapping

We have started the recruitment of a permanent staff member in February 2023 however we have not had any suitable candidates so far to interview.

**Insurance Team** have completed and are working on the following initiatives to improve the Council's risk management.

- Procurement exercise for the re-valuation for insurance purposes of the remaining Council properties which have not been subject to a re-valuation in the past two years. The re-valuations are due to be completed by 31 May 2023 and feed into the September 2023 renewal.
- A paper on the proposed tender for the Council's insurance arrangements was presented to Cabinet in March 2023 and was approved. We are currently in the position of placing the tender on the Council's CHEST. The insurance market remains focused on technical pricing to achieve profit rather than in the past focused on market share.
- We have used some of the "free days" as part of the insurance programme risk bursary to provide training for duty holders and manage contractors on site at schools and corporately.
- We are working with insurers and the Council's liability insurers to robustly defend claims and in limited circumstances will pursue through the Courts claimants to recover Council costs where the claims are proven to be exaggerated.
- Team continues to work extensively with Service Teams including Highways, Green Sefton and Tourism to improve the management of insurable risk in areas where there are high numbers of claims or areas of concern.

**The Risk and Resilience Team.**

Business Continuity are currently developing a Corporate Business Continuity Plan using the existing Service Area Business Continuity (BC) Plans. Following the exercise of the Council's BC arrangements in January 2023 which we have subsequently received feedback on we are currently implementing the recommendations from the review. We have revised the Council's BC Strategy and Policy which is due to be presented to the Cabinet during the summer 2023.

The **Risk and Resilience Team** have completed the Council's Risk Appetite which was presented to the Audit and Governance Committee in March 2023 as well as facilitating the updates of the Council's Corporate Risk Register working with the Risk Owners to update the risk register. Other work includes:

- Working with the Merseyside Resilience Forum
- Development of a Shoreline Pollution Plan
- Review of the Council's emergency facilities

For the **Health and Safety Team** there will be a continued focus during the next quarter of delivering the Health and Safety Improvement Plan.

- Continue to review, update and monitor the Health and Safety Standards and Policies, with focus on working from home, display screen and workstation assessments and stress risk assessments.
- Continue to develop the Council-wide training needs assessment which will eventually build into the health and safety training plan and provision.
- Completing a planned review of the Council's Health and Safety Policy and completing the Annual Health and Safety report.
- Focus on improving the accuracy of incident reporting across the Council will continue to ensure incidents of threatening and abusive behaviours towards staff are reported.
- Continue to deliver a health and safety management audit and inspection regime across the Council, to schools with a Service Level Agreement with the Council and those schools where the Council retains responsibility for the health and safety as the employer. This will provide assurance that health and safety management systems are suitable and effective.

## **ICT**

- The ICT Service continues to work on a number of significant transformation programmes as well as delivering the BAU ICT Service alongside Agilisys. Key projects currently in flight relate to support for the Children's Improvement Programme, Customer Services (CXP), Data Centre relocation, Sefton Arc and Leisure ICT Improvements as well as Cyber Security.
- There have been challenges obtaining the larger volumes of ICT KIT required to finish the backfilling of all desks at Magdalen House, however the team are pleased to report that this work is nearing completion. In addition, devices have been deployed across Southport Town Hall to support the Adult Social Care teams located in this space.
- Data centre rationalisation and right sizing is now completed within the existing Data Centre at St Peters ready for a move to Bootle Town Hall during financial year 23/24. Conversations are ongoing around options for the location of the new data centre, given the complexity of the design.
- The Cloud telephony project is now closed, the final work to be completed during the next few months is to remove the remaining infrastructure supporting a legacy telephony range which is not linked to the historical Mitel telephony system (which 8x8 replaced). Most of these direct dial numbers are thought to be historical but unfortunately it is not possible to report on the usage of these lines, work is to be planned with Virgin to soft cease these numbers to assess impact prior to removal. Communications will be issued in advance across the Council. This has been slightly delayed due to the need to move one Library which is currently on a direct dial number, work in progress.
- The new CXP solution went live across all services in January this year, with the final elements of phase one (migration of legacy processes) nearing completion. The two remaining legacy services - Cleansing Maintenance & Pest Control - are in final stages of build and test in the new CXP solution; once complete, the legacy CRM system can be formally decommissioned. In terms of phase two, work is now underway to transfer Council eforms to CXP from the legacy eforms system, and work is also starting on the configuration and set up of FOI processes in CXP. Initial scoping of future process builds is being prepared, most notably for Registrars and for internal Establishment Control.

- Work is now completed on the last phase of the website improvement programme. A project request is now with Agilisys to schedule the upgrade of the Umbraco web content management system. Alongside this, the Communications team continues with an ongoing content review and is also reviewing ancillary sites to see if any of these should be incorporated into the main Council website.
- Procurement activity continues to be a challenge. Consultation on the new forward plan has taken place with corporate procurement colleagues with the final report due to be presented to ELT and the Cabinet member soon.
- As per the last update the procurement for Corporate Connectivity did not complete with a successful outcome, with no bidders meeting the requirements of the authority. The Client team is now exploring alternative routes to market, with a potential for joint procurement across the Liverpool City Region, in the interim Cabinet have now approved a direct award with Virgin to ensure continuity of the existing service whilst options are reviewed.
- The threat level in relation to Cyber Security remains high and the team are working hard to implement new technologies and tools to stay one step ahead of the risk. Work is underway on a full security review linked to Zero Trust networking, with proposals to follow in relation to potential security improvements.

## **Property Services**

The Property Services Department are a multi-Disciplinary team delivering various services, professional advice and initiatives across the Borough of Sefton. Below are some examples of ongoing pieces of work throughout the department.

### Asset Management / FM

- Ongoing work to deliver approved Asset Disposals with further phases being developed for approval.
- Ongoing work supporting Growth Board projects.
- Delivery of centralised accommodation for Children's Services to support their accommodation strategy.
- Ongoing work in connection to lease agreements.

### Maintenance Management & Building Services

- Delivering a range of schemes in support of Corporate Buildings.
- Delivering a range of schemes in support of Education Capital & SEND programme.
- Delivery of reactive maintenance and statutory compliance services to Corporate and Educational buildings.
- Professional advice and support on a broad range of regeneration programmes.
- Implementation of a new coordinated (property based) IT system in support of Corporate & Education.
- Phase 1 essential maintenance delivery plan for corporate buildings progressing with some works complete.
- Formulating asset survey delivery plan alongside the essential maintenance.
- Delivering services in support of major adaptation to vulnerable and disabled residents.

## Project Management

- Provide professional support to Growth Board on several projects.
- Project delivery for various Education capital & SEND schemes.
- Provide support to other teams on Asset Disposal, Building Maintenance, Asset Management, Energy and Statutory Compliance colleagues.

## Energy Management

- Sefton Council Retrofit programme (LAD3, HUG) – Providing insulation to privately owned properties (worst/not insulated & for poorest residents 407). This has been extended and the completion date is now September 2023.
- A programme of work to support schools (after large energy price rises) is ongoing.
- Feasibility Study for a Wind turbine is ongoing.
- Sefton have transferred electricity provider. Post 1 April, all Council buildings and street lights are 100% renewable energy powered.
- Energy prices (gas and electricity) continue to be high in particular due to the government support has been removed.
- Work on the next phase of the Climate Emergency programme is progressing.

## **Legal Services**

### **Democratic Services Team – Overview**

- **Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Adult Social Care and Health)**

At the time of drafting this report, the next meeting of the Committee will be held on 20 June 2023 and the following items are likely to be considered at the meeting:

- Liverpool Clinical Services Review
- Public Health Outcomes Framework
- Adult Social Care Preparation for Assurance
- NHS Cheshire and Merseyside, Sefton - Update Report
- NHS Cheshire and Merseyside, Sefton - Health Provider Performance Dashboard
- Cabinet Member Update Reports
- Work Programme Update

- **Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding)**

At the time of drafting this report, the next meeting of the Committee will be held on 6 June 2023 and the following items will be considered at the meeting:

- Sefton Place - Community Emotional Health and Wellbeing Services Update 2022 – 2023
- Children's Services Improvement Programme
- Children's Social Care Overview of Practice
- Safeguarding Learning and Development Offer
- Education Scorecard
- Ofsted Inspection Reports
- Parent Governor Representative
- Cabinet Member Reports

- Work Programme Key Decision Forward Plan

- **Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)**

Since the last update a meeting of the Committee has not been held. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 27 June 2023 and will consider the Work Programme for 2023/24. The Committee will also consider:

- a potential date for an informal meeting of the Committee to consider a strategic approach for waste containment/disposal across the borough
- a date for a visit by Members of the Committee to the Recycling Discovery Centre at Gillmoss
- the views of the Head of Highways and Public Protection on the separation of parking offences and environmental offences, currently undertaken in a dual enforcement role by Civil Enforcement Officers

- **Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services)**

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 13 June 2023 and it will consider the Work Programme for 2023/24.

**Corporate Communications and Covid-19** - An informal meeting of the Committee was held on 3 February 2023 to review the topic of Corporate Communications and Covid-19. Recommendations from the informal meeting were approved by the Committee held on 28 February 2023. Following this, a report was submitted to Councillor Lappin as the appropriate Cabinet Member seeking her approval of the recommendations. The recommendations were approved and arrangements are now being put in place to implement them.

- **Overview and Scrutiny Management Board**

The next meeting of the Management Board will be held on 20 June 2023. Matters considered at the meeting will be included in the next update.

- **Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The last meeting of the LCRO&S scheduled to be held on 19 April 2013 was cancelled.

The next meeting of the Committee will be held in July 2023 and matters discussed at this meeting will be reported as part of the next update.

The Committee is made up of 3 elected Members from each of the constituent Local Authorities of the LCR Combined Authority, along with one elected Member from both the Liverpool City Region Liberal Democrat Group and the Liverpool City Region Conservative Group.

Sefton's appointed Members are Councillors Desmond, Hart and Howard. Councillor Howard is Sefton's Scrutiny Link.

## **School Appeals**

The Section has continued to organise and clerk school admission appeal hearings and school exclusion reviews.

This is the busiest time of year in the school appeals calendar for the Clerk to the Education Appeal Panel. Between 10 May through to 19 June, 256 LEA appeals were listed/heard and 44 Archdiocese (Catholic voluntary aided schools) appeals were listed/heard. Primary school hearings will start week commencing 26 June and run through to 4 July. The number of Primary appeals is still to be confirmed, but it is thought to be higher than previous years. Further 'wash up' dates dealing with late appeals and in-year transfers will also continue to be held during this period.

During April two days of training events for Education Appeal Panels were held. The first was aimed to train new volunteers for the role of Panel members. We aimed to recruit new Panel members from serving school governors. The second was the bi-annual refresher training to appraise existing Panel members of any changes or developments to the Admissions and Appeals Codes. This training was conducted internally as a remote training session using MS Teams.

## **Civic and Mayoral Services**

- The Freedom of the Borough Ceremony for HMS Mersey took place on 13 April 2023, followed by a Parade on 16 April.
- Councillor Burns was installed as Mayor of Sefton for 2023/24 at the Council's Annual meeting on 16 May 2023. The installation brought to a close Councillor Clare Louise Carragher's two-year term as Mayor of Sefton and Councillor Carragher served the office with dedication and distinction.

## **Member Development**

### Member Induction

The induction of new Councillors took place in the week following the elections. Councillors attended individual induction sessions for the completion of requisite forms to enable them to receive their Councillor allowances, car park passes, etc.

On Friday 12 May 2023, the new Councillors attended a half day Induction Programme and were welcomed and introduced to the Council by the Chief Executive and the 5 Executive Directors. They also received briefings by the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer on the Code of Conduct, the Nolan Principles and Standards regime, Register of Interests and Members Allowance Scheme, etc. Information was also provided on IT provision, the Member Development Programme and accessing and navigating the Council's intranet / Committee pages. The half day morning session culminated in a buffet lunch when they were joined by Assistant Directors.

Details of induction programmes provided by the **Local Government Association** and **North West Employers** are detailed Member Development Handbook and new Councillors have been enrolled on these programmes.

### Handbooks

As part of their induction, Councillors also received 2 key documents:

- The Guidance for Councillors Handbook 2023-24 and
- Member Development Programme Handbook 2023-24.

Hard copies of these documents were provided to all Members at the Adjourned Annual Council meeting on 18 May 2023 and Councillors have also since received electronic copies.

### Member Development Programme 2023-2024

The Member Development Programme is now well underway with training being provided to **Committee Members** as soon as possible following the confirmation of Committee appointments by Council on 18 May 2023.

1. The mandatory Planning Committee Training session took place on 24 May and was well received by Members and Substitute Members of Planning Committee. The session was attended by all of 15 of the Planning Committee Members and 11 of the 15 Substitute members. A special “mop-up” training session has been arranged for those Councillors who could not attend.
2. Mandatory Licensing and Regulatory Committee training is due to take place on 12 June prior to the first meeting of that Committee.
3. Overview and Scrutiny Committee training - Democratic Services have been working closely with the LGA for the provision of the following training for Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members:
  - On 30 May 2023 the first of three sessions for Members and Substitutes of Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Children’s Services and Safeguarding
  - Two training sessions for all Overview and Scrutiny Members and Substitutes will be held at Bootle Town Hall on 15 June 2023.
  - Arrangements have been made for the provision of training for all the O&S Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs and for mentoring support for the Chair of the O&S Committee (Children’s Services and Safeguarding) following the confirmation of Committee appointments by Council on 18 May 2023.
  - Negotiations are currently underway with the LGA for the provision of dedicated training for O&S Adult Social Care and Health Committee members and substitutes.

Mandatory Corporate Parenting training– Following the return of the Council’s Corporate Parenting Officer, the mandatory Corporate Parenting Course will continue to be provided in-house, supported by the Cabinet Member - Children’s Social Care. In 2023-24 the training will be provided on 4 separate occasions to maximise take-up.

## PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT

### Operational Issues

Advice and support are provided to all service areas regarding employment/staffing matters.

Predominantly, work issues and support is focused on Children’s Social Care. There is a small, dedicated HR team in Children’s Social Care providing advice and guidance on all staffing matters. The challenge continues to be the recruitment and retention of Social Work staff combined with developing improvements in the service area overall. Arrangements are in place to establish a central recruitment team to support the transformation improvements in CSC.

The majority of the HR team are agile working, combining working from home and at office sites as required and following advice from the Health and Safety team.

Matters relating to disciplinary, grievance and dignity at work continue to be lesser than pre-covid period. Formal meetings continue to be held via Microsoft Teams, although in person meetings are taking place as necessary. Advice and support in the management of sickness absence continues and formal action under the sickness absence policy is being taken, again via Microsoft Teams or in person as necessary.

Operational Teams appreciate the need for sensitive advice given the pressures on Employees and the Authority.

## **Health Unit**

During the period 1 April to 31 May 2023, a total of 144 referrals for SMBC employees were made to the Health Unit (HU). This is a slight decrease in comparison to the same period in the previous 12 months in which there were 151 referrals.

Referrals during this latest period included Education Excellence (45.82%), Children's Services (13.89%) and Operational-In-House Services (9.72%) and ASC (9.72%). As usual the main reasons were stress and mental health related (54.86%), chronic medical illness (19.44%) and musculoskeletal (15.97%).

3. Delivery of all the OH services are now offered via a mixture of telephone and video calls and face to face appointments. This arrangement appears to be working extremely successfully and enables flexibility for both managers and employees. It is especially beneficial to those employees who are not absent or who are located in Southport as it can reduce the amount of time away from work to attend. The HU will, however, continue to triage referrals based on the condition rather than any other factors.

## **Transactional HR Payroll & Pension (THRP) Services**

There are still some issues with Monthly Data Collection (MDC) for the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) which we are working with Midland HR (MHR) and Merseyside Pension Fund (MPF) to resolve. Sefton have now submitted MDC files up to Match 2023 to enable MPF to issue annual benefit statements to members.

Teachers Pensions Monthly data collection (MDC) moves to Monthly Contribution Reconciliation (MCR) has been delayed until 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023 as the iTrent software has several known issues.

The staff are still learning parts of the new system and there are issues with how long the system is taking to process some records and this has been raised and is being investigated by MHR.

There are backlogs in the teams due to process, reporting and resource issues and all work is being prioritised.

Some THRP staff are continuing to work from home and more staff are coming into the office. Some processes have had to be changed and the staff have embraced these changes. The number of staff going into the office is still being closely monitored.

There are now outstanding pay awards from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022 for Soulbury staff and 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 for NJC staff, Councillors and Chief Executive pay.

MHR have rolled out MFA (multi factor authentication) and THRP are receiving lots of queries from employees trying to access their Employee Self Service (ESS) record. Most queries have now

been dealt with and THRP are going to hold drop-in sessions in Bootle, Southport and Hawthorne Road Depot to help staff access ESS.

## **Workforce Learning and Development (CLC)**

### **Apprenticeships**

Staff enrolled on the **Level 6 Social Work Apprenticeship Degree**, **Level 6 Occupational Therapy Degree** and the **Level 7 Senior Leader Apprenticeship Degree programme (MBA)** are continuing with their studies and are making good progress.

We have procured a training provider called Solace who specialises in Public Sector Leadership and Management qualifications to deliver the **Level 5 Operational/Departmental Manager Apprenticeship standard**. The course will be aimed at aspiring Middle Managers/Managers and upon successful completion of the qualification candidates will gain two accredited awards: ILM Level 5 Leadership and Management and Operational/Departmental Manager Standard Apprenticeship. A total of 12 places will be available and the course will commence 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023.

We have launched another higher level apprenticeship called **the Level 6 Environmental Health Practitioner Degree**. A selection process is underway, with one place available for a September 2023 start.

### **Training delivery**

The Workforce Learning and Development Team continues to deliver a number of training programmes and initiatives. These include:

- **Corporate Mandatory Training** – this includes Equality and Diversity, Health and Safety, Safeguarding Adults Awareness, Safeguarding Children & Young People Awareness and Climate Change. Monthly reports have recently been updated to include the mandatory courses for managers. Additional courses include Sickness Absence and Equality and Diversity for Managers eLearning, Recruitment and Selection, Managing Capability and Managing Disciplinary, Grievance and Dignity At Work virtual classroom sessions. The reports are shared with ELT/SLB to encourage staff to complete these courses.
- **Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)** training delivery is going well. To date, we have trained 210 Sefton Council and schools' staff. That is an increase of 34 staff since the previous report.
- **LCRCA Race Equality Training** – working with the LCRCA and neighbouring LAs to develop a training programme to complement existing E&D awareness training. This will include the 'lived experience' to enable us to address the structural and systemic racial biases that exist in some organisations and to challenges micro aggressions and unconscious biases in the workplace. To date we have delivered 4 managers sessions, (76 managers have attended) and 4 non-managers sessions, (71 staff have attended). We recently advertised a further 4 sessions (2 manager / 2 non-manager sessions) across May and June 2023 (120 places in total). Delivery is underway therefore attendance figures will be included in the next Cabinet update report.

- The development of a **Personalisation Training Programme** for students, ASYEs and for new starters working across Adult Social Care, who have not undertaken this training previously. The target date for completion is 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023.
- Developed a **Personalisation Survey** to find out how Adult Social Care have progressed in their Personalisation journey. The aim was to find out how learning is being embedded into everyday practice and any challenges experienced in doing so. 57 staff responded to the survey and the findings will help inform future training and development in this area.

## **Workforce/Organisational Development**

We have been supporting Children's Social Care with a number of workforce development actions following the recent Ofsted inspection:

- Commissioned Insights Leadership Training for Children's Services Directors and Service Managers. The Service Manager took place on 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> April 2023 and 19 managers were in attendance. The session was well received, and positive feedback was shared with Children's Services Senior Leadership Team.
- Developed a CPD training offer for Children's Services which includes essential training for Social Workers and Managers. This will be reviewed quarterly, and any updates included.
- We are working with the Leaving Care Team to develop a training programme for Care Leavers. This will grant Care Leavers access to selected Mandatory Training courses to provide them with foundation skills and knowledge in each topic. We attended the Making a Difference Group on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> May to present the training programme/consult with young people to ask for their views including ideas to enhance the offer. The training programme was well received, and we came away with some actions which included sourcing social media aware awareness training.
- We are worked with HR and Legal to develop a 3 hour Managing Performance Training session. This was an action identified in the Children's Services improvement plan. The aim of the course is to provide managers with the tools to consistently apply performance management across Children's Services, and to recognise their role and contribution to effectively manage performance. To date, we have trained 40 Service/Team Managers and have scheduled a further two mop up sessions in June.

## **Communications**

The team supported the elections providing on the day coverage.

The website continues to be developed and improved, with the migration of the My Sefton news microsite complete. It is anticipated that this will increase traffic to the Council website.

## **Procurement**

Formal engagement meetings have taken place with service areas. Their purpose is to update the Contract Register across all Service Teams; review current workplans and timelines; identify future or prospective projects; and update the Procurement pipeline. These sessions will be held on a regular basis/

The rollout Social Value training has continued.

## **Performance & Business Intelligence**

The Business Intelligence team is continuing to support many work streams across the Council including Economic Regeneration, Education Excellence, Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care and Public Health Services. The team have developed a new performance framework for Children's Social Care and Adults Social Care services, using the recently implemented Data Warehouse and Power BI. Progress continues with the development of the Council's new enterprise data warehouse platform, which will enable cross-Council big data analysis. The team is also supporting the information requirements for the Children's Social Care Improvement plan. A key focus in the next quarter is to reproduce the Education chapter of the Council's JSNA.

### **Consultation & Engagement, Complaints and Information Governance.**

The Service continues to support consultation and engagement activities, respond to complaints and subject access requests in a timely manner and provide information, advice, and guidance across the Council on matters relating to information governance and data protection. There is a challenge with capacity in the Complaints team, but the Service is actively recruiting to vacant posts to address the issue.

The project to digitise the Council's historic paper records continues at pace. All legacy records stored at disparate 3<sup>rd</sup> party locations have now been moved to the Council's preferred secured storage provider, taking opportunity to destroy legacy records and digitise those that are not required to be kept in original paper format.

### **Strategic Support**

The team is now focused to providing support across the various services with policy & strategy development, service reviews and transformation activity, including support for Children's Social Care Improvement plan.