

CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills – 27th June 2023)		
COUNCILLOR	PORTFOLIO	DATE
Trish Hardy	Communities and Housing	June 2023

COMMUNITY SAFETY AND ENGAGEMENT TEAM

Neighbourhoods

A site visit has taken place with Network rail after a complaint regarding the railway embankment along Lorne Road. The embankment is full of litter and fly-tipping. Although network Rail have stated they would not be able to gain access to remove 100% of the waste, they are sending in contractors to remove what they can safely. This will involve some of the fencing along Lorn Road being removed as a temporary measure.

A clean up has taken place on Netherton Park Estate with the MP and ward members. OVH provided two skips as did the Council. Plus Dane provided a caged tipper for the day. The Council cleansing team removed weeds and provided a mechanical vehicle to service the area.

We consistently receive complaints regarding black sacks being placed out along South Road on non-collection days. Businesses are trying their best to keep the area clean and encourage people to the area, but the issue is persistent. The team have met with local business owners and have installed a new bin to encourage residents of the flats to place their waste around the bin instead of along the road. We have also provided letters to the flats reminding people of their collection day and their responsibilities of disposing of their waste correctly.

The team have been working with Cleansing and the Councils Ground Maintenance team to enable Cleansing to make use of lane closures that are in place whilst grass cutting is in progress to enable a large mechanical sweeper to sweep the inside lanes of Netherton Way, Southport Rd, Northway & Ormskirk Road.

Work is continuing with colleagues in Cleansing and Network to make improvements in Formby Village which have been identified by ward members. The work includes a mixture of environmental work to cleanse the pavement areas in the village and the introduction of bollards to restrict vehicle access on the pavement.

Community payback have continued to carry out work across the Borough. It has been agreed that they send a team every month to the Sefton Estate area to clean up and maintain the space. Community Payback have confirmed they are ready to take outside painting requests with summer approaching.

Cost of Living / Welfare Reform

Foodbank voucher information:

1st April 2022 - 1st April 2023	South Sefton	Southport
Total Vouchers received	8066	2301
Adults supported	10137	3136
Children supported	6427	1805
Total supported	16564	4941
Crisis Type	Low income –6065 vouchers presented 12547 people supported	Low income –1352 vouchers presented 2862 people supported
Family Type	Single 4559 vouchers presented 56.52%	Single 1126 vouchers presented 48.94%
Age group	25-64: 8853	25 – 64: 2665

Sustainable Affordable Living Coordinator

The Sustainable Affordable Living coordinator will be facilitating the Foodbank and Pantry network that has been previously managed by Sefton CVS. It is key to the success of this project that partner organisations support our approach and are happy to share their specific Sustainable Affordable Living data so that we can look for trends, hot spots, and gaps in provision.

The Officer has met with the leaders of the 'Taking Root in Bootle' network and is working with them develop a way to share any produce that they have a glut of at harvest times. At the scale of production now, this would not be sustainable across the whole network, as the growers predominantly grow for their surrounding community, however, working with these groups we are looking at adopting unused green spaces to create growing areas that communities can engage with and reap the benefits of their labours.

Holiday Activity Fund

39 providers who took part in Easter HAF 2023 and engaged with 1400 unique attendees. Young people took part in a range of physical and creative activities as well as Easter scavenger hunts and crafts; skating; Eurovision themed activities; mindfulness; cooking and baking; trips to the cinema, the beach the park and more.

Feedback from providers, attendees and families was very positive with a focus on young people having the opportunity to access experiences they otherwise would not be able to.

The HAF team worked with colleagues in the leisure team to offer free swimming sessions during half term to under 16's in receipt of free school meals. The project will allow young people to access 1 free swimming session in the shorter holidays and 3 sessions during the summer break.

Warm Spaces / Clothing Support

Funding has been agreed to support organisations who want to continue to offer a space for people to attend throughout the year. There will be two tranches, a summer offer May –

September and a winter offer October- March. Some providers are opting to do just winter due to capacity, other activities etc however, a large number want to continue through the summer months. This round of the project will bring in the organisations that were not funded through the original HSF offer and are listed as additional warm space providers into this tranche after being Quality Assessed.

The project name will change to Welcome Spaces then switch it back to Warm Spaces in the winter.

It has also been agreed to offer funding to provide Clothing support to residents via CVS and the Family Wellbeing Centres. This year the project will offer clothes throughout the whole year rather than just in the winter months. Additionally, to support the offer of free-swimming sessions for children eligible for free school meals, the teams are looking to source swimwear for families that may find it a barrier to accessing the service.

Hate Crime

Reports of far-right graffiti continue. The Hate Crime JAG, Merseyside Police and the Police and Crime commissioner's office coordinated a leaflet drop in the Rawson Road/Claremont Road area of Seaforth in response to recent instances of graffiti.

Equalities

Sefton Council signed up to the Disability Impact Pledge. An event to launch the new Equality and Diversity Strategy took place at Crosby Lakeside on 11th May.

Anti-Social Behaviour

An increase of Youth ASB in the Coronation Park and surrounding area has been reported. Merseyside Police, Sefton ASB team, the Youth Team and Green Sefton liaise on a weekly basis regarding this, to enable effective action.

The ASB team are supporting Merseyside Police carrying out action days focusing on street drinkers breaching the PSPO.

Youth Service

An LGBTQIA+/Hate Crime Awareness session has been delivered to the new Youth Justice Turn Around Team. A partnership Project with The Open Eye organisation is taking place and artwork was Exhibited in May at the Atkinson.

The team supported sessions during the Easter Holiday's at SPACE. These were delivered alongside SPACE's Easter HAF activities - which included their very own version of Euro Vision.

The Linacre Mission Youth Session has resumed on a Tuesday night, staff are out and about encouraging young people to attend the session.

DOMESTIC ABUSE FESTIVAL OF PRACTICE

On the 28th & 29th March 2023, the Domestic Abuse Commissioners Office held their first ever Festival of Practice. The festival took place at the Midland Hotel in Manchester and was free to attend with organisations restricted attendance-wise to one delegate per day. As well as whole conference, plenary sessions at the start and end of each day, there were also 2 thematic workshops per day. Sefton were represented at the event and attended workshops that had featured in Sefton's Needs Assessment as unmet need or had appeared in Sefton Domestic Homicide Review Learning.

The themes, priorities, emerging issues and examples of good practice have been recorded and will be embedded in Sefton's Action Plan for delivering the Domestic & Sexual Abuse Strategy 2023-2028. Furthermore the event provided assurance that Sefton's direction of travel for the Domestic Abuse Strategy is correct. The event was hugely beneficial and we will attend future events when they become available.

Fully Integrated Community Domestic Abuse Service

Current DA provision in Sefton has evolved historically and has the potential to be disjointed and based on risk. The Council has 4 core funded Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) and has accessed some time limited funding to increase this cohort by 4 to a total of 8. The role of Sefton's IDVA's is to support high risk (gold) victims of DA and male victims.

Sefton Women's & Childrens Aid (SWACA) receive £210,900 per annum to deliver their core adults and children's and families support services. These services are delivered to medium risk (silver) DA victims.

There is currently no commission for standard risk (bronze) victims of DA. Historically victims of 5 standard risk DA incidents would be referred by the Police to Venus Charity for access to the generic family support services. However, as this is a non-contracted and non-specified service there is no clarity of availability and in recent months referrals have not been accepted. Indeed, the very nature of 5 low risk DA incidents would immediately raise the risk to medium. We know through our Domestic Homicide Reviews the many Domestic Homicide victims, are not previously known to services or have previously been determined to be low risk. There is a clear gap in service offer that represents a high risk to the council executing its statutory duty. This project would seek to address this.

I received proposals for the introduction of an integrated Community Domestic Abuse service that operates on a network approach and the service will provide:

- A holistic support to the victims and families of domestic abuse who are deemed at standard risk (bronze) of following a Merseyside Police report of domestic abuse.
- A holistic support to the victims and families of domestic abuse who are deemed at medium risk (silver) of following a Merseyside Police report of domestic abuse.
- A holistic support to the victims and families of domestic abuse who are identified from other sources within the borough that are not deemed to be at the level of MARAC (Multi-agency Risk Assessment).
- Strong links with education settings & Family Well Being centres in the borough and support the delivery of Operation Encompass (the notification given to schools following a domestic abuse incident involving a child). To deliver appropriate healthy relationship sessions to groups when required.

- A domestic abuse helpline that can be contactable for a minimum of 5 days per week between the hours of 8am to 6pm which could be utilised by victims, the families & friends of victims and professionals seeking support and advice around domestic abuse.
- A minimum of one a week drop-in session in each of the localities, based on identified needs to allow residents to seek support around domestic abuse. These need to be flexible and accommodate all residents.
- Domestic abuse recovery-based programmes (e.g., Recovery Toolkit) that aid the long-term recovery of victims and build resilience across the borough developing flexibility to allow open access to all that need this.
- Strong links with Primary Care Networks, Mental Health providers, and Community Link workers, where they exist, and to offer support for victims and families who are within mental health services and in need.
- Offer therapeutic counselling support for victims and families effected by domestic abuse, aiding long term recovery and prevention.
- Strong links with the existing provision delivering domestic abuse support in the borough including the IDVA team, Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise provision, and partner agencies.
- Effective communications to raise the profile of Domestic Abuse, and available services, advice and guidance, using a range of communication channels, including digital.
- Training programme for the Council, partner organisations, private sector business community and general public.
- Co-locating the IDVAs into the new service will be explored to ensure there is seamless transition from silver to gold and vice versa.

It is proposed to commission SWACA to deliver this service for a 12-month proof of concept period before a full and open procurement process takes place in 2024.

Community Safety Partnerships – Response to Consultation

The government launched a consultation on the recently launched Anti Social Behaviour Action Plan as well as the first part of a Community Safety Partnership (CSP) review.

The ASB Action Plan was published following two months' focused work by officials in the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Home Office in response to a January speech by the Prime Minister setting out his intention to crack down on ASB. The plan includes a mix of measures targeting ASB in different settings, as well as the causes of it, and covers drug use, homelessness, environmental crimes and ASB within properties, as well as measures for dealing with those who commit ASB. The plan references some funds to support the measures, and there are a number of potential implications for councils' work in this area, some of which will be the subject of further consultation. As part of the plan, the Government is consulting (via the CSP review consultation) on proposals to strengthen a number of ASB tools.

The CSP review arose from part two of the recent review of Police and Crime Commissioners, which found that CSPs were not being used as effectively as they could be and recommended a full review of CSPs. In practice the consultation published does not appear to be a full review of the role of CSPs in a complex landscape, and how best to support them, but instead focuses quite narrowly on information sharing/accountability between CSPs and PCCs, and on CSPs' role in ASB. Part two of the review is likely to consider some of these more strategic issues later this year.

The closing date for the consultation was 22 May and Sefton responded with its views which were largely supportive of the proposals.

New Knife legislation - Response to Consultation

On the 18 April 2023 the government launched a public consultation on legislative proposals to tackle the use of machetes and other bladed articles in crime. The consultation ran between 18 April and 6 June 2023. The consultation was open to the public and was targeted at directly affected parties, including the police, Crown Prosecution Service, community groups, businesses and organisations with a direct interest in the proposals.

The government are seeking views on 5 legislative measures, summarised below, to tackle knife crime:

Proposal 1: Introduction of a targeted ban of certain types of large knives that seem to be designed to look menacing with no practical purpose.

Proposal 2: Whether additional powers should be given to the police to seize, retain and destroy lawfully held bladed articles of a certain length if these are found by the police when in private property lawfully and they have reasonable grounds to believe that the article(s) is (are) likely to be used in a criminal act.

Proposal 3: Whether there is a need to increase the maximum penalty for the importation, manufacture, sale and supply of prohibited offensive weapons (s141 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 and s1 Restriction of Offensive Weapons Act 1959) and the offence of selling bladed articles to persons under 18 (s141A of the Criminal Justice Act 1988) to 2 years, to reflect the severity of these offences.

Proposal 4: Whether the Criminal Justice System should treat possession in public of prohibited knives and offensive weapons more seriously.

Proposal 5: Whether there is a need for a separate possession offence of bladed articles with the intention to injure or cause fear of violence with a maximum penalty higher than the current offence of possession of an offensive weapon under s1 of the Prevention of Crime Act 1953.

Sefton responded to the consultation by the deadline. We know the impact that knife crime has on our Communities and we are supportive of the proposals.

LIBRARIES

Library Assistant shortlisted for Municipal Journal Award

Crosby Library Assistant Lizzie Todd has been shortlisted for the prestigious national Municipal Journal Awards which recognises excellence in local government. Lizzie has been shortlisted for the rising star award for the work she has carried out in developing an android tablet loan project, the Crosby Smokery, Slime making workshops and a social media takeover event. She has attended an assessment interview with the judging panel for the second stage of the evaluation and then will attend the awards at the end of June.

Tablet Loan project up and running

The ground-breaking tablet loan project through libraries and the Homeless Team is now up and running. While tablet loan projects already exist using ipads, this project is the first one of its kind to loan android tablets which are significantly more cost effective. A significant period of research

and development was required to deliver a working model which safeguarded personal data but also allowed for remote management. Samsung developers in Brazil, Canada and Korea were involved in producing specific code for Sefton's tablets so that the Knox management software would work as required. For the 6-month pilot, the tablets have unlimited data, but this is expensive for so many tablets, so free data has been sourced via the UK Databank and will be applied once the pilot is concluded. Tablets are now being loaned at Crosby Library and the Homeless Team will be loaning their tablets via Lonsdale House.

Success of new pods

In October 2022, 4 sound-proof study pods were installed in Southport and Crosby Libraries, following a successful bid to the Library Improvement Fund. The new pods have been fitted with equipment to allow for virtual meetings and software was installed to allow them to become language labs. This would support the work towards integrating into the community refugees in Sefton. These pods were a new venture for the Library Service and they have proved an overwhelming success.

Since October the pods have been used for over 1125 hours. Their usage is interesting and varied:

- Tutoring excluded children – 180 times
- Work related activities, interviews and meetings etc – 195 times
- Refugee support – 73 times
- Use by community groups – 177 times
- Private study – 497 times

The Library Improvement Fund expected the usage to be monitored and reported on. Our estimates for expected usage for the full year have already been wildly exceeded after less than 6 months.

Crosby Library refit, partial closure

Crosby Library was closed for a couple of days at the beginning of June to allow for the replacement of the lending shelving. The new shelving has a steel core and is on casters, meaning it is mobile. As well as modernising the look of the library this shelving will allow for the existing space to become much more flexible. The size of storytimes and other children's activities can be increased as the shelving can now be move to create more space for events. Staff at the library worked tirelessly to remove 23,000 items of stock from the old set of shelves to the new ones, and then dismantled the old shelving.

New Crosby Library Project

The initial study looking at options for the delivery of a new library in Crosby Village was presented to Cabinet Members on 25th May 2023. Options for the disposal of the existing site were also discussed. It was decided to progress further developmental works towards the delivery of this project including extensive public consultation and more detailed cost analysis. This will take place over the next 6 months, with a further report to be presented at the end of the year. A site development brief has been prepared by Planning for the redevelopment of the existing site, and is ready for use upon commencement of soft market testing. A planning application for the new library (and health) development, the junction and access improvements within Crosby Village is anticipated to be submitted later this year.

THE ATKINSON

Theatre Programme

The June programme features some sparkling comedy performers who will be familiar to audiences from their television and radio appearances -

Andy Hamilton (7 June) has won numerous awards as a writer who has co-written and directed such household TV classics as *Drop The Dead Donkey* and *Outnumbered*. He is a regular panellist on shows such as *QI* and *Have I Got News for You*.

Justin Moorhouse makes a welcome return on 17 June, encouraging us to 'Stretch & Think' as we embrace the challenges and delights of growing older into middle age – yoga, labradoodles and lycra clad cyclists are included in the topics for celebration!

BBC Radio's **Alfie Moore** is a 'cop-turned-comedian' whose stand-up show on 23 June will share his personal insights into life on the front-line of the police force.

Exhibitions Programme

Following the conclusion of the Sefton Open competition the gallery spaces have been re-animated with the launch of four dazzling new exhibitions -

The Story So Far 27th May – 2nd March 2024 Harris Museum

Looking at the theme of storytelling, this exhibition includes highlights from The Atkinson's collection and the Harris Art Gallery in Preston. The Harris's collection is built upon the wealth and personal collections of the textile manufacturers of the town. Richard Newsham, whose father made a fortune from cotton and from banking, left a sizeable bequest of paintings featuring work by the leading British artists of the day, several of which will be included in the exhibition. The Atkinson's founding collections were acquired from the wealthy middle-class families that retired to the seaside resort of Southport or bought holiday homes in the town. Both collections received important founding bequests of narrative paintings and continued to develop this strand of collecting well into the twentieth century.

The exhibition will look at differing kinds of story-telling, from the illustration of literary and historical texts to coastal and rural genre as well as classical and domestic scenes. The exhibition will also include post-war and contemporary works of art, illustrating the galleries' strategies for developing the narrative theme.

Gordon Cheung: The Garden of Perfect Brightness 3rd June – 9th Sept 2023

A poetic exploration of the relationship between nature, culture, and power in the digital age. Through a series of paintings and sculptures, viewers are invited to contemplate the rise and fall of civilisations in the age of globalisation. The show is constructed around the concept of a Chinese garden with sculptures created from Financial Times newspapers which draw inspiration from traditional Chinese 'scholar's rocks' or 'spirit stones'. Embodying microcosms of landscapes they are meditative focal points between nature and civilisation.

Herbert Ponting: Explorer & Photographer 10th June – 2nd Nov 2023

After years of taking photographs in America, Japan, other parts of Asia and in Europe, Herbert Ponting became and remains best-known for his work on Captain Scott's Terra Nova expedition (1910-3). This exhibition will be looking at his life and work with photographs from Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, alongside artefacts and research carried out by biographer Anne Strathie.

Blue and White Pottery 17th June – 28th Oct 2023

The Willow Pattern has long been a stock pattern of nearly every British Pottery manufacturer. Here we showcase some of The Atkinson's historic blue and white pottery collection and look at

the ongoing fascination modern ceramicists have with The Willow Pattern and blue and white decoration.

Museum Programme

The Museum has contributed to Sefton's celebrations commemorating the 80th anniversary of The Battle of The Atlantic. Bootle has incredibly strong links to Battle through the influence of Captain Johnny Walker, whose courage and ingenuity helped to protect convoys of merchant ships crossing the Atlantic. There are numerous items commemorating him in Bootle Town Hall, including two paintings on loan from the Atkinson.

The Atkinson arranged two free talks on the subject: one about the contribution to the Battle of the Atlantic by Liverpool and Bootle by David Roberts; another in online format about the Battle of The Atlantic, 1939 – 1945 with military historian Aldon Ferguson. Both events were well attended, with the online talk attracting some listeners from the USA.

The commemorations were enhanced with an online exhibition displaying some of the amazing WW2 images from the Atkinson's collection -

<https://www.theatkinson.co.uk/whats-on/online-exhibitions/battle-of-the-atlantic/>

Southport Library

Last month the library hosted a Dementia Wellbeing Hub, which was organised in partnership with the Alzheimer's Society to promote with Dementia Action Week 2023 (15-21 May). The hub featured a number of participants such as Sefton Council's One Stop Shop, the Memory Clinic, Sefton Carers' Centre and Adult Social Care teams - all of whom offered practical advice to those living with dementia and their carers. The event attracted over 40 attendees and there are plans to continue with the hub as a regular feature within the library programme.

Other News

To support Sefton's Armed Forces Community Covenant, the Atkinson will host a special Sunday opening on Armed Forces Day 25 June with a range of family activities co-ordinated with groups and charities representing the respective military services.



HOUSING

Extra Care Housing

As colleagues are aware the Council has a target to deliver 1306 new Extra Housing units before 2036. Work continues to progress on a number of schemes across the borough, including a scheme to develop 91 Extra Care Homes and 67 for Affordable Rent which had commenced on a site off Hawthorne Road in Bootle. Although there has been a delay to the scheme we expect the work to commence soon.

Following the granting of planning consent, the proposed development of 90 Extra Care Homes, 40 for Affordable Rent and council facility providing 8 short-term assessment units at Sandbrook Road in Ainsdale is progressing well. Initial board approval from Riverside has now been obtained and work is progressing to enable a start on site later this summer.

The Extra Care Allocation Policy public consultation process was conducted from Friday 10th February 2023 for a period of two months to Tuesday 11th April 2023. A full report will now be presented back to the public engagement and consultation panel in July. Responses were very positive with between 87% and 96% in support of the various criteria sections. Envisage the final policy will be presented to cabinet in Autumn this year.

Private Sector Housing

Enforcement and Licencing

The new 5 year Selective and Additional (HMO) Licensing Schemes commenced on 1st March 2023. As at 30 May 2023, 546 licence applications had been received by the team and 115 licences have been issued. Licence compliance inspections have commenced with many landlords seeking to apply for property accreditation.

The team have been successful at 2 Housing Tribunal appeals, where each Landlord appealed against their Civil Penalty Fine for failing to licence their properties during the 2018-2023 scheme. Both Civil Penalties were upheld by the Tribunal. There are a further 4 appeal cases and 1 criminal prosecution pending for failure to licence properties.

There have been 68 requests for service relating to poor housing standards received between 1 April and 30 May 2023. Where landlords fail to comply with informal action, the team continue to take formal enforcement action relating to poor housing standards. During April & May this has included the service of an Emergency Prohibition Order, Improvement Notices and Notices relating to breaches of the Electrical Safety Regulations, Smoke Alarm Regulations, and Minimum Energy Efficiency standards.

Work to reduce the number of long-term vacant homes has continued, with responses to 10 new Service Requests relating to problematic empty homes and a further property being identified for an Enforced Sale.

Management of the Council's Gypsy and Traveller site continues, and improvement works identified on a recent condition report have been completed. There have been 2 Unauthorised Gypsy & Traveller encampments in Sefton during April & May.

Riverside Dispersed Accommodation Programme

Sefton Council recently won the Best Initiative for Tackling Homelessness category at this year's Northern Housing Awards for its Riverside Dispersed Accommodation Service.

The pilot, which was launched in 2019 by Sefton Council, commissioned Riverside Housing to provide two or three-bed furnished properties with support to those families which Sefton's Housing Options Team would previously have struggled to accommodate. At that stage, there was only temporary hostel accommodation available for families, with people facing the prospect of having to move away from their existing support networks and could face several moves before stable accommodation was offered

Sefton Families Service provides families the option to transfer the home from temporary to general needs tenancy after the support. This approach helps families settle immediately into a home-for-life, near schools, family and friends, and as part of the community. And results in a range of tangible benefits, including in terms of health, and provides a stability that helps them put down roots

Winning the award is a tribute to everyone who has been involved in its development and ongoing management, and the scheme is having such a positive impact on the day-to-day lives of nearly 40 Sefton families who before they were part of it were facing a range of issues, including homelessness. And demonstrating financial value to the Borough

An independent evaluation carried out on the pilot found that the service delivered £3.36 of benefit for every £1 spent. Sefton Families Service, in this award, it is.

In late 2022, Sefton Council commissioned the Sefton Families Service for a further two years.

The Northern Housing Awards judges said: "The success of this scheme is unquestionable, with a 100% success rate in terms of families remaining in homes.

"The well-thought-through approach to resolving outmoded practices is impressive.

"A super example and well evidenced throughout."





Council Housing Programme

Business Plan – The Business Plan for a 1st phase to establish the new programme was approved by Cabinet in May. The 1st phase of growth will see approximately 50 new council owned homes made available at Social Rent levels over the next 5 years.

Management Agent – Tenders have now been returned for the Managing Agent to manage the new council housing. Officers are in the process of assessing the bids to determine the successful bidder.

Buckley Hill Lane – Officers continue to work with Sandway Homes on the acquisition of properties at the Buckley Hill Lane site as the first new council housing which is expected next year. We are in the process of confirming the contractor with an anticipated start on site is September 2023 with the site of 63 homes built over a number of phases.

The Buckley Hill Lane Scheme

Proposed Development Mix

2 Bed house	8
3 Bed house	23
4 Bed house	14
1 Bed Apt	9
2 Bed Apt	9
TOTAL	63

Phasing Key

	No. Units
Phase 1A & 1B	4 + 4
Phase 2A & 2B	8 + 9
Phase 3	18
Phase 4	12
Phase 5	8

